

Some Current Educational Problems

NIKHIL RANJAN ROY



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By

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PREFACE

Education in India today is passing through highly interesting phases of experiment, development and even failure. Since independence our educational scene has acquired new dimensions, and thrown up new horizons of thought and imagination against the background of far-reaching social and economic changes. Recent educational trends and problems provide fruitful fields of study, which are as much exciting as rewarding. The essays in this book are the results of a field-worker's foraging for new findings, and a presentation of his points of view that may, in all likelihood, provoke and stimulate the students of education.

N. R.



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A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The destiny of a nation is shaped in its class-room. This is no rhetoric but truism. The national system of education more than anything else mirrors the national genius and character. Education represents in the main the conscious effort of the society to perpetuate and preserve itself, and is, therefore, deeply tinged by the national character and outlook. It is also shaped and moulded by many other factors. The different systems of national education may differ sharply from one another in character and content. The English system of education, for example like the English Constitution, until recently grew up as a matter of accident and convention rather than deliberately preconceived plans. The English are a freedom-loving people. Civil and personal liberty is yet nowhere better guaranteed than on the soil of England. The world's political fugitives down the centuries have found safe refuge in Britain. Carl Marx and Lenin, to mention only two extreme cases, found political asylum in London as well as time and opportunity to develop and propound their revolutionary ideas. Love of freedom and catholicity of outlook are well reflected in the English system of education, which in brief represents the many-sidedness of English life, and seems, not unnaturally, vague, chaotic, unsystematic and unplanned to an outsider observer. The Englishman's belief that social welfare is best assured through the sense of responsibility of the citizens rather than through State dictation is well confirmed in his system of education. This is one of the reasons why England is not as rich and ingenious in educational theory as Germany and the United States. Individualism and practical-mindedness are the two outstanding qualities of the American character. Equality of opportunity in education is widespread and real in the United States, and at the same time

the influence of business methods and efficiency upon education is so pronounced. The American education system, by and large, presents a curious mixture of individualism with uniformity and standardization.

Common Characteristics :

Subject to variations according to the social structure and the form of government, the national systems of education may claim certain characteristics in common.

From the administrative point of view a system of education may be called national if it is under the control of a central administrative system, which means that organization, curricula, syllabi, teaching methods and standard of examination, etc., are prescribed and imposed by the central authority. Until recently the French system is a typical example. A national system also provides free and equal educational opportunities to all according to their abilities and aptitudes. Certain common purposes actuate, and public funds sustain the system. The spread of democratic ideas and popular forms of government further emphasize the importance of equality of educational opportunities. Educational opportunities do not only guarantee provision of free, obligatory and universal elementary education, but also envisage adequate preparation for participation in political, social and economic life of the country. But the demands of the modern society are too vast and complex to be met by a mere course of elementary education.

From the quantitative point of view modern India's educational requirements have been succinctly stated by the Education Commission of 1964-66. India today is confronted by a tremendous population explosion. Nearly half of India's 500-million population is below the age of 18. The total student population today is estimated at over 70 million, and is likely to increase to 170 million by the next two decades. The number of existing educational institutions is more than 500,000 and

the strength of teaching personnel available is about two million. Numerical deficiencies and organizational weaknesses already well-pronounced have got to be overcome in about twenty years' time so that the country may have a broadbased system of national education. The Commission has carefully analysed the country's major problems, and lays down an outline and pattern of educational system considered necessary for meeting the country's most pressing needs. The national objectives have been set forth in specific and practical terms.

The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavour to relate it to the needs and aspirations of the people, and thereby make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realisation of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be so developed as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernisation and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values.

Education and Productivity :

The following programmes should be pursued to relate education to productivity :

Science Education : Science education should become an integral part of school education, and ultimately become a part of all the courses at the higher stage.

Work-Experience : Work-experience should be introduced as an essential part of all education. Every attempt should be made to orientate work-experience to technology, and industrialisation and application of science to productive processes, including agriculture.

Vocationalisation : Secondary education should be increasingly and largely vocationalised, and in higher education greater emphasis should be placed on agricultural and technical education.

Social and National Integration : Achievement of social and national integration is an important objective of the educational system, and the following steps should be taken to strengthen national consciousness and unity :

The Common School : The common school system of public education should be adopted as a national goal, and be effectively implemented in a phased programme spread over 20 years.

Social and National Service :

Social and national service should be made obligatory for all students at all stages. These programmes should be organised concurrently with academic studies in schools and colleges. At the primary stage, programmes of social service should be developed in all schools on the lines laid down in basic education. At the secondary stage, social service for a total period of 30 days, at the lower secondary stage 20 days, and at the higher stage 10 days a year should be made obligatory for all students. It may be done in one or more stretches. At the undergraduate stage, social service for 60 days in total (to be done in one or more stretches) should be obligatory for all students. Every educational institution should try to develop a programme of social and community service of its own in which all its students should be suitably involved for periods indicated above. Labour and Social Service Camps should be organised by creating a special machinery in each district. Participation in such camps should be obligatory for all students for whom no such programmes have been organised by the educational institutions they attend.

The N.C.C. should be continued on its present basis till the end of the Fourth Five-Year Plan. The authorities concerned should explore the possibility of providing this training on a whole-time basis in a continuous programme of about 60 days at the undergraduate stage. Meanwhile, alternate forms of social

service should be developed, and as they come into effect, the N.C.C. should be made voluntary.

Language Policy :

An appropriate language policy for the educational system can materially promote social and national integration. Mother-tongue has a pre-eminent claim as the medium of education at the school and college stages. The medium of instruction at the school and in higher education should generally be the same. The regional languages should, therefore, be adopted as the medium of education in higher education.

The UGC and the universities should work out a programme for the adoption of these recommendations suitably for each university or a group of universities. The change-over should be completed within ten years.

Energetic action is needed to produce books and literature, particularly scientific and technical in regional languages. This should be made a responsibility of the universities assisted by the UGC.

The all-India institutes should continue to use English as the medium of instruction for the time being. The eventual adoption of Hindi should, however, be considered in due course, subject to certain safeguards.

The regional languages should also be made the languages of administration for the regions concerned as early as possible so that higher services are not barred to those who study through the regional medium.

The teaching and study of English should continue to be promoted right from the school stage. Encouragement should be given also to the study of other languages of international communication. The study of Russian deserves special attention.

It would be desirable to set up a few institutions both at

the school and the university level with some of the important world languages as media of instruction.

English will serve as a link-language in higher education for academic work and intellectual intercommunication. It is, however, equally obvious that English cannot serve as the link-language for the majority of the people. It is only Hindi which can and should take this place in due course. As it is the official language of the Union and the link language of the people, all measures should be adopted to popularise it in the non-Hindi areas.

In addition to Hindi, it is essential to provide multiple channels of inter-State communication in all modern Indian languages. In every linguistic region, there should be a number of persons who know the other modern Indian languages, and some who are familiar with their literature and able to contribute to them. For this purpose, there should be adequate arrangements, both in schools and colleges, for teaching different modern Indian languages. In addition, steps should be taken to establish strong departments in some of the modern Indian languages in every university. At the B.A. and M.A. levels, it should be possible to combine two modern Indian languages.

National Consciousness :

Promoting national consciousness should be an important objective of the school system. This should be attempted through the promotion of understanding and re-valuation of our cultural heritage and the creation of a strong driving faith in the future towards which we aspire. The first would be promoted by well-organised teaching of the languages and literatures, philosophy, religions and history of India, and by introducing the students to Indian architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance and drama. It would be desirable to promote greater knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the different aspects of India by including their study in the

curricula, by exchange of teachers wherever possible, by the development of fraternal relation between educational institutions in different parts of the country, and by the organization of holiday camps and summer schools on an inter-State basis designed to break down regional or linguistic barriers.

Creation of faith in the future would involve an attempt, as a part of the course in citizenship, to bring home to the students the principles of the Constitution, the great human values referred to in its preamble, the nature of the democratic and socialistic society which we desire to create and the Five-Year Plans of national development.

There is no contradiction between promotion of national consciousness and development of international understanding which education should simultaneously strive to promote. The school programme should be designed to inculcate democratic values.

Education and Modernisation :

In a modern society, knowledge increases at a terrific pace and social change is very rapid. This needs a radical transformation in the educational system. Education is no longer taken as concerned primarily with the imparting of knowledge or the preparation of finished product, but with the awakening of curiosity, the development of interests, attitudes and values and the building up of essential skills such as independent study and capacity to think and judge for oneself. This also involves a radical alteration in the methods of teaching and in the training of teachers. To modernise itself, a society has to educate itself. Apart from raising the educational level of the average citizen, it must also try to create an intelligentsia of adequate size and competence, which comes from all strata of society and whose loyalties and aspirations are rooted to the Indian soil.

Social, Moral and Spiritual Values :

The educational system should emphasize the development of fundamental, social, moral and spiritual values. From this point of view the Central and State Government should adopt measures to introduce instruction in moral, social and spiritual values in all institutions under their (or local authority) control on the lines recommended by the University Education Commission and the Committee on Religious and Moral Instruction. The privately-managed institutions should also be expected to follow suit.

Apart from instruction in such values being made an integral part of the school programme generally, some periods should be set apart in the time-table for this purpose. They should be taken, not by specially recruited teachers but by general teachers, preferably from different communities, considered suitable for the purpose. It should be one of the important objectives of training institutions to prepare them for it. The University Departments in Comparative Religion should be specially concerned with the ways in which these values can be taught wisely and effectively, and should undertake preparation of special literature for use by the students and the teachers. It is necessary for a multi-religious democratic State to promote a tolerant study of all religions so that its citizens can understand each other better and live amicably together. A syllabus giving well-chosen information about each of the major religions should be included as a part of the course in citizenship or as part of general education to be introduced in schools and colleges up to the first degree. It should highlight the fundamental similarities in the great religions of the world, and the emphasis they place on the cultivation of certain broadly comparable moral and spiritual values. It would be a great advantage to have a common course on this subject in all parts of the country and common text-books which should be prepared at the national level by competent persons in each religion.

SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

Amongst the various problems of education in India today that of Secondary Education is perhaps the most talked-of one. Various criticisms are levelled against the present system, and various are the suggestions offered for its reformation and reorientation. The reason why the Secondary Education system does, and should, receive so much of public attention is but obvious. However much a people may be educationally advanced, economically well-off and culturally progressive, the fact remains that the bulk of the school-going population have to complete their formal education at the Secondary stage and have no chance to go up further. Comparatively only a few go up for higher pursuits of knowledge and learning at the Universities and Higher Academies. Secondary Education caters for the largest clientele, and forms the main structure of the national system of education. In more than one way, the objective and ideology of Secondary Education reflect the pattern of civic life, and guide and direct the nation's cultural trends.

The Present Position :

Secondary Schools in West Bengal and in the whole of India, except perhaps in the Delhi State, conform to a uniform pattern. The Secondary Schools in West Bengal come under three categories, namely, High Schools and Junior High Schools. To these may be added two other types, namely, the Senior Basic Schools corresponding to the Junior High schools, and the latest type—the 11-year multi-purpose High Schools or Higher Secondary Schools. The total number of Secondary Schools of all types is over 3,500 with an overall enrolment of 7·65 lakhs in

round figure. According to an all-India computation, the total number of all types of Secondary Schools is nearly 32,500 and the number of students attending them comes to 85,26,000. Expenditure on Secondary Education in India from all sources, Government and non-Government, direct as well as indirect, amounts to Rs. 54 crores nearly. Secondary Education in West Bengal has appreciably grown and expanded in extent and volume since the partition of the country. But still the facilities offered by these schools fall short of the real needs of the people. It is just roughly estimated that at least three times the present number of Secondary Schools will be necessary to meet the requirements of West Bengal. The immediate future, so far as we can visualise, presents a picture of all-round expansion of education through the auspices of the Five-Year plans.

Qualitative Approach :

Reformation and reconstruction of the system of Secondary Education from the qualitative point of view is essential today, perhaps more than ever. Even without entering into a detailed examination of the existing system of Secondary Education, its merits and demerits, one may categorically say that it is time for parting with the past. No educational system is worth the name, if it is not in tune with the changing social order. Adaptability to the social needs constitutes the real value of an educational system. Looked at from that angle, the existing system of Secondary Education which owes its origin to certain specific needs of the British administration in India more than a century ago, needs a thorough overhaul and reformation.

English Education in India :

English Education was introduced in this country by a resolution of the Government under Lord William Bentinck in the thirties of the last century. The statement of policy as enunciated in a Government communique reads : "The great

object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and sciences among the natives of India". The schools, established in the wake of the adoption and promulgation of this policy gained in popularity mainly because the education imparted in the schools at once placed the recipients in a position of preference and privilege. They received official recognition, gained in social prestige and were given preference in appointment to the Government as well as non-Government service.

Establishment of Universities :

The second notable stage in the progress and development of English education in this country was the establishment of the three Presidency Universities in 1857. The object of the Universities was identically the same, namely, cultivation of European literature and sciences. The secondary schools served, and even today continue to serve as feeders to the Universities. Their *raison d'être* consists in preparing students for the examination for admission to the Universities. As a result, Secondary Education in this country never attained a status of completeness and self-sufficiency.

Some Drawbacks :

The very first blame laid at the door of the Secondary School is that it is very largely isolated from the real life-situation. The curriculum of the Secondary School is entirely geared to the needs of the University Examination. The broad fact that only a handful of the High School students go in for the higher courses is complacently overlooked. The students at the Secondary Schools are seldom trained and equipped to face life confidently and competently.

Being predominantly bookish and examination-centred, the present system attaches very little importance to the development of character and personality of the student.

The system is single-purpose and stereotyped. There is practically no scope for the training and development of the inherent potentials that the student is endowed with. Exclusive emphasis is laid on one aspect, namely, memorisation—memorisation of facts and information given in the text-books and disgorging the same on the examination-paper.

Greater stress is laid on competitive success than on collective and co-operative achievement.

The overriding importance of examination tends to concentrate the teachers' and the students' energy and attention upon that one purpose to the complete neglect of other considerations. The average student is obsessed with the dread of the examination. The process of learning is looked upon as an unavoidable evil, and is scarcely a matter of joyous experience. The method of teaching is humdrum and stereotyped.

Perhaps the strongest argument against the present system is its apparent failure to meet the demands of the new social, political and economic situation. India today is striving hard to set her house in order. She is striving hard to come up in line with the rest of the progressive world. She is striving hard to assure for each one of her 500 million citizens the four basic freedoms :

(a) Freedom of speech and expression, (b) Freedom of worship, (c) Freedom from want and (d) Freedom from fear.

India has chosen to work out her destiny as a free, secular and democratic state. This new situation puts forward new demands.

The New Situation :

In this entirely changed context, our educational system and the Secondary system in particular, requires to be replanned and remodelled :

In the first place the secondary system should be linked

with the education that is being imparted at the elementary stage at the mass-level. The Secondary and the Basic (Primary) Education systems must be integrated.

The Secondary School must provide diversified courses so as to enable every student to grow and develop according to his aptitude and ability. The appalling educational wastage caused by the present single-rut system must by all means be stopped. The only effective solution of this intriguing problem lies in providing a variety of courses and facilities.

By far the largest number of the students will have finished their formal education at the secondary stage, say at the age of 14 or 15 or utmost 16. So, the secondary curriculum must be complete and self-sufficient by itself. A student going out of the school having completed his course should have adequate training and confidence to face life and exploit its possibilities.

Adequate arrangements for training in arts and crafts, trades and vocational subjects, humanities as well as fine arts are necessary. The courses of study must be properly balanced between theory and practice, between humanities and social studies on the one hand and vocational subjects on the other.

The school must be the training ground for civic and democratic education. Cooperative activities should be encouraged in preference to competitive. By and large, the Secondary School is to train students to assume the responsibility of leadership in their own spheres. Training in democracy in the larger sense must begin in the school through healthy community living fostering the spirit of tolerance and accommodation. The high principles of *Pancha Shila* may be gainfully put into practice in the prime of life that is, in the school.

Emphasis should be shifted from the one-sided book-centred education to the development of the whole personality of the student by imparting useful knowledge, cultivation of varied interests, training of the social impulses and development of creative talent and artistic aptitudes.

Lacking in Social Objectives :

Almost all grades of our schools from the Elementary right up to the University are dominated and guided by one supreme motive—examination and cramming for examination. It is time that we think of our education not merely as an instrument of preparation for the examination, but as preparation for life itself.

The most telling indictment of the educational system today all the world over is its narrow utilitarian outlook, its fetish for position, prize and power, and its neglect of the moral and spiritual values. The absence of social objectives is a serious lag. Education seems to be completely subjugated to the intense pressure of utilitarian motives. This outlook has a most unfortunate impact upon our character. It produces a rather negative attitude of the mind in most cases, and all too often creates ego-centrism and cynicism toward public affairs and indifference to social obligations.

Our aim today should be to have such education as may transmit its impact from the school to the home, from the home to the community and from the community to the world at large. Training for a job or profession is only one incident in the educational process. True education is to establish a synthesis between utilitarian and human and spiritual aspects of life.

EDUCATION AND HUMAN RELATIONS

The human society is essentially a product of human relations. These relations are personal and individual as well as collective and gregarious. They owe their origin to the natural instinct for self-preservation and security. They grow around our interests both emotional and pragmatic. These relations are also motivated and governed by the conditions of individual and group activities in the various fields.

Teaching :

Teaching is essentially a social action, and is as such one of the foremost of personal relations. Even as a profession, teaching is entirely different from trade, business and industry, in which one may be successful by mastering the business techniques and the so-called trade know-how. Not that trades and business are absolutely impersonal. Human relations, that is, relations between the producer, the seller and consumer, are matters of considerable importance in any such undertaking. But then these relations are more mundane and matter-of-fact and less human. Teaching unlike trade and commerce is a relation between two souls. Human beings meet, like and care for one another. They help one another and share each other's knowledge and experiences. Though more often than not undue emphasis is laid on pedagogic methods and techniques, a teacher cannot dream of success without cultivating such normal human relations as usually subsist between friends, brothers, sisters or husband and wife.

Master-Disciple Relationship :

The historic master-disciple relations as between Krishna-

Arjuna, Buddha-Ananda, Plato-Aristotle, Ramkrishna-Vivekananda and Gandhi-Nehru offer a clear cue. The master and the disciple merge themselves as it were into an integrated identity of love, regard and understanding. One complements the other. There is complete identification of ideas and ideals between the two. It is like transmission of light from one lamp to another. The characteristics of such relations are undoubtedly equality, honour and freedom. The teacher-student entente should above all be cordial and based on mutual respect and understanding. Freedom and equality must constitute the core of such relationship. Without freedom such relationship degenerates into domineering by the powerful master over the weak and helpless slave. The less the element of freedom the less is the personal touch. Freedom, however, is always subject to limitations enjoined by the accepted code of social behaviour. This limitation notwithstanding, teaching in the right sense should permit freedom of expression as well as freedom of action.

An Example :

Such freedom is, of course, nurtured by appreciative understanding. An example : Rabindranath used to do regular class teaching at his Santiniketan School. One autumn morning a class had assembled as usual under an *amla* tree. The poet was giving a lively exposition on ornithology. A scientific study of bird-life, coupled with the poet's own inimitable way of expression, had created an atmosphere of profound interest. But for the poet's own melodious voice, pindrop silence pervaded the assemblage, and the listeners were all attention. But then the poet's attention was diverted a while. He directed his look, and with him the rest looked at one of the students, who was gazing towards a top branch of the tree overhead. The boy was apparently inattentive. His conduct seemed inexcusable. He would incur the poet's grave displeasure. But to

everyone's pleasant surprise, the poet also looked on apparently interested in the spectacle of a tiny oriole performing its antics up in the tree. No sooner had the bird flicked away than the poet resumed his talk. To the delight of the class, the poet referred to the habits of the tiny oriole as a part of the day's lesson, thus according his tacit approval to the 'inattentive' boy's conduct.

Freedom and Equality :

Such an attitude on the part of the teacher promotes better understanding, and adds to the sense of dignity of the pupil. Freedom generates joy, and lack of freedom breeds frustration. Freedom and equality are obviously inter-related. One is incomplete as well as incomprehensible without the other. Without conceding equality the teacher very much looks like a man in authority looking down upon the student from a higher observation-point. Detachment and objectivity need not always be the sole guiding principle. It is not recognition of the subject as a human being. Treatment of the student just as a case or type of something with which you enter into relations is certainly neither a correct nor a desirable approach. The student is merely observed and manipulated by the teacher's knowledge about him. The teacher only does what people want him to do. Treatment on the footing of equality means that both the teacher and the student are human beings—one is not the subject and the other not the object. Both are subjects. The teacher and the student communicate and share their experiences as fellow human beings.

Role of Language :

The principal means and medium for the growth and development of mutual relations are communication. Language undoubtedly is the most important means of communication

between a man and a man. It is language, again, that distinguishes man from the rest of the animals. Man, of course, is born human before he learns how to speak. But then man is born with the potentiality of learning language, and thereby acquires the traits of humanity. Just as in other forms of human and social relations, communication and for that matter, language, plays a great role in teaching. This starts almost from the very time the child steps into the threshold of the school. The reception that the child is accorded on his first day at school does in many cases determine the future of his school career and academic progress. From the very beginning the teacher's duty is to make the pupil feel at home. The Public Service Commission adopts the technique of cultivating cordial acquaintance with the candidate at first.

Shaw's Recommendation :

The object is how to bring the very best out of the candidate. To scare him is to push him inwards. His real worth is hidden inside the shell of shyness and nervousness. The correct psychological approach is not to find fault with the man, but to help him in giving the best that he is capable of. The teacher's work above anything else consists in discovering the innate talent through observation, perspection and appreciation. Once, as the final judge of an all-England essay competition, George Bernard Shaw is said to have recommended all the competitors for the award of a particular prize. This he did on the basis of an appreciative assessment of the different merits of the essays. This was not unusual for a man of Bernard Shaw's originality and temperament. He was nothing if not original and out of the way. Nevertheless, his action points to a fundamental question in education, namely, how to draw out the hidden talent of the student. In strict reality there is no bright boy, no dull boy, no good boy, no bad boy. It is the difference in

attitude and treatment that makes one so. The home, the school and the social environment largely make what we become.

Gardener Par Excellence :

The teacher is the gardener par excellence. It is under his fostering care that the human sapling grows up into flowering. Real discipline has its roots in the teacher's care and affection. Discipline follows automatically where confidence has been given and returned. Lying, for example, is a pernicious habit. It is very much chronic amongst youngsters at home, in schools and boarding-houses. This is so because the child is seldom taken into confidence by the elders. The child would confide his secrets to his friends and play-mates, but seldom to his elders and teachers. Confidence must be a two-way traffic flowing first from the educator's end. Confidence begets confidence, and confidence ensures discipline.

EDUCATION IN INDIA TO-DAY

Briefly speaking, but without being too terse, we may say that the major problems of our country are hunger and ignorance. Our problems are legion. But truly speaking, the root-problems are our economic backwardness and wide-spread illiteracy, from which follow all the rest. One such problem, for example, that of rapidly increasing population which threatens to thwart and outstrip all our plannings, is but the direct result of poverty, lack of protein food, low standard of living etc. on the one hand, and ignorance and lack of education, knowledge and skill on the other.

Economic and educational backwardness go hand and glove. No country in the world's history ever prospered economically without corresponding advancement in education. All the economically underdeveloped countries and peoples of today are educationally backward. The question of educational reconstruction in India is an essential and integral part of the comprehensive Five-Year Plans for national development. It is not just an attempt at increasing the number of schools and scholars as apart and isolated from our endeavours in other fields such as agriculture, trade and industries, transport, housing, roads, water-supply and the rest. As a matter of fact, education is the very basis of the national plan, and constitutes the sheet anchor of the movement directed towards the uplift of our economic, social and cultural standards. It is an overall and comprehensive plan for national regeneration and development.

Post-War Reconstruction :

Much criticism has been and is still being levelled

against the system of Western education introduced in this country by the pioneers of the nineteenth century renaissance. Without repeating those off-repeated charges, it will suffice to say that from the point of view of policy and character, the system despite all its merits was not a national system. Financial provision for education in the pre-Independence days was pitifully inadequate for the needs of the people. Serious thinking as to how to broadbase and reconstruct education had, however, started during the days of the Second World War. Sir John Sargent was the Educational Adviser to the Government of India at that time, and the widely known report associated with his name drew up a comprehensive scheme for the organization and development of education for the people of the country at different levels. The report has since been widely discussed. To the credit of the author of this scheme it must be said that the scheme is refreshingly clear in conception, and bold in outlook and vision. For the first time we have had an ably written-report giving us a complete picture of the vastness and complexities of our educational problems, and also assessing the requisites and means for solving them. It must also be acknowledged that most of the subsequent five-year educational schemes more or less toe the Sargent Report lines.

Mahatma Gandhi and Basic Education :

About the same time another important move in the matter of educational development was undertaken under the direct inspiration and leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. '*Buniyadi Siksha*' and '*Nai Talim*' are well-known expressions in the Indian educational parlance today. Mahatma Gandhi envisaged a truly national system of education for all classes of people, particularly, the millions dwelling in our villages. The main principles and philosophy of Basic Education may be summed up as :—

Education should be imparted through the medium of the

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mother-tongue. It should be free and compulsory for all children of the age-group 7-14.

Education should be related to the physical and social environment of the scholar.

Education should not be as heretofore, mere book-learning, but should be correlated to some basic craft or creative work such as spinning, weaving, gardening, carpentry, wood-work, leather-work, home-craft, drawing and painting etc. To be more precise, education should be work-centred. Intellectual development and development of aptitudes should proceed simultaneously. One is complementary to the other.

A Basic School should be an economically self-sufficient unit. The school should pay its way through the earnings from its products.

Administration of a Basic School should be conducted according to cooperative and self-governing methods.

Discipline should not be imposed from above, but discipline should grow from within.

About three decades ago Gandhiji broached his educational ideas. In the meantime we have learnt a good deal through trial and error. Except for the fact that it is not feasible to run a Basic School on economic self-sufficiency basis, a fact which has now been admitted, Basic Education has been accepted as the national pattern of elementary education in India. Alongside the establishment of new Basic Schools, action is also being taken to re-orientate and convert the existing traditional type primary schools into the Basic pattern.

Pre-Basic Education :

Primary or Basic Education at the Junior stage is intended to cater for the age-group 6 to 11. The Wardha Scheme envisages education through the Basic methods at Secondary, Collegi-

ate and even University level. For the education of children prior to the normal age for schooling, the scheme provides for pre-Basic Schools. The well-known and widely accepted principles of laying the foundation of a man's education through formation of correct and healthy habits have been adopted in the pre-Basic Schools. These institutions resemble but do not just imitate the Kindergarten and the Montessori systems. Pre-Basic education is more formative than didactic.

Secondary Stage :

According to Article 45 of the Indian Constitution, all boys and girls of the age-group 6 to 14 have had to be brought to school by the end of the 3rd Five-Year Plan *i.e.* 1966. But due to socio-economic reasons progress in this direction has not been quite up to expectation. Free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 *i.e.* covering the penultimate stage of Secondary Instruction would indeed be a great achievement, a big stride towards the desired objective. In recent years certain changes of far-reaching importance have been instituted in the structure and pattern of the Secondary system of Education. The Secondary Education Commission popularly known as the Mudhaliar Commission (1953) made the following noteworthy recommendations :—

That one more academic year should be added to the existing Class X course.

The object of this addition of one more year is to make the secondary stage of education complete by itself.

That diversified courses on Science, Technology, Commerce, Agriculture, Fine Arts, Home Science and Humanities should be offered to the students according to their ability and aptitude. Apart from certain common core subjects the students will be allowed to pursue any one of the above streams.

For correct selection of the courses according to the student's aptitude and suitability, specialised training in vocational guidance, counselling and career mastership should be introduced in the Teacher-education programme.

Consequent upon the extension of the Secondary stage to 11 years, the two-year Intermediate Course should be abolished, and a three-year Degree Course replaces the present 2-year one.

All existing 10-Class High schools should by stages be upraised as 11-Class Higher Secondary Multipurpose Secondary Schools.

College and University Education :

Our educational reforms went further afield. Apart from the introduction of the 3-Year Degree Course, some other notable reforms and innovation in this respect are as follows :—

Acceptance of the principle that Higher Education should be made available only to those who are fit to profit by it.

Larger provision of facilities in the manner of free places, stipends and scholarships etc. with a view to making Higher education available to the poor and the meritorious.

Creation of new Faculties of studies etc.

Provision of greater facilities for the study of Science, Technology and research.

Other Developments :

The national plan also pays due attention to the essential ancillaries to the major schemes. The Plan is an integrated and comprehensive one. It includes such important schemes as :

The scheme for technical, scientific and vocational education, under which, Higher Technical Institutes, Engineering Colleges with diversified courses, Polytechnics, Trade schools, Schools of Printing, to name a few, have been and are being established in increasing numbers.

Social (Adult) Education. This scheme is specially meant to cater for the out-of-school adults that constitute the bulk of illiterate populace of India. The scheme also includes provision of community activities and social and cultural programme.

Education of the physically and the mentally handicapped.

Physical Education & Youth Welfare—N.C.C., A.C.C. and National Service.

Sahitya Academy/Sangeet Natak Academy : Promotion of aesthetic education through literature, fine arts, music, dance, drama etc.

Promotion and production literature — the National Book Trust.

Planning and Administration :

The planning and administrative machinery at the back of educational reconstruction in the country is fairly extensive and complicated. Education according to our Constitution is a State subject. The Union Government is concerned with coordination of facilities and policies, and determination of standards in respect of Higher education, research and scientific studies. Coordination in the different spheres of education is brought about by certain permanent bodies, namely, the All-India Councils of Primary and Secondary Education, the All-India Council of Technical Education, and the All-India Council of Women's Education. The University Grants Commission, which was appointed in 1953, advises the Government on the es-

establishment of new Universities and allocates financial assistance to the different Universities. There are certain other agencies, namely, the All-India National Boards to offer advice to the Union and the State Governments on different aspects of educational development. Above all, there is the Central Advisory Board of Education of which amongst others the Ministers of Education of the States are ex-officio members. This is the country's top advisory body in educational matters.

The Union Ministry of Education :

The Union Ministry of Education not only formulates the general plan and pattern of education subject to adoption or adaptation by the State Governments, but also provides funds for educational development in the States generally on matching basis. The Union Government exercises direct control over the four centrally-sponsored Universities : (i) Delhi, (ii) Banaras, (iii) Aligarh, and (iv) Visva-Bharati, and also over a number of All-India Institutes, Laboratories and Research Institutions etc. The Union Government administers education in the Union Territories.

The Divisions indicating the different branches of work in the Ministry of Education may be listed as follows :—

- (i) Primary and Basic Education
- (ii) Secondary Education
- (iii) Hindi
- (iv) Social Education & Recreation
- (v) Physical Education and Youth Welfare
- (vi) Scholarships
- (vii) Higher Education
- (viii) Cooperation with UNESCO.

Education in the States :

Apart from issuing general directives laying down certain broad principles and pattern, and providing funds for the imple-

mentation of the Centrally-sponsored Schemes, the Union Ministry leaves the educational field entirely at the disposal of the State Education Departments. The States enjoy autonomy in educational matters.

Briefly, the State Education set-up consists of a Minister assisted in some cases by a State and/or Deputy Minister. The Education Minister and his secretariat are responsible for formulating policies. The responsibility for drawing up plans and executing them rests with the Director of Public Instruction and his staff in the Directorate. The Universities, the Board of Secondary Education and the District School Boards set up under the respective Acts of the Legislatures are autonomous bodies to a greater or lesser extent. This set-up is common to most of the States.

Educational Progress in West Bengal :

West Bengal is repeatedly called, and rightly so, the problem State of India. No other State in India has had to face such tremendous political and socio-economic upheavals in the last twenty-five years as this partitioned and truncated State had to. But despite the baffling condition, West Bengal, it must be conceded, did not lag behind in tackling her educational problems with courage and confidence. Advancement in all the different departments of education, namely, Primary Education, Basic Education, Higher Secondary Schools, Collegiate and University Education, Social Education and Library Services etc. has been more substantial than spectacular. Some relevant statistics speak for themselves :—

Primary and Jr. Basic Schools

		<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>No. of attending scholars</i>
1947-48	...	13,950	10,44,111
1961-62	...	30,335	28,43,302
1964-65	...	32,581	34,16,751

High/Higher Secondary Schools

		<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>No. of attending scholars</i>
1947-48	...	858	3,86,972
1961-62	...	2,805	8,55,285
1965-66	...	5,003	14,00,000

Colleges for General Education and Universities

		<i>No. of colleges for general education</i>	<i>No. of Univer- sities.</i>	<i>No. of scholars in Universities and colleges for gene- ral education</i>
1947-48	...	55	2	38,140
1961-62	...	134	5	1,20,153
1964-65	...	161	7	1,34,110

Education Budget (Expenditure)

1947-48	...	Rs. 4,00,00,000 (appx.)
1961-62	...	22,00,00,000 (appx.)
1964-65	...	28,38,47,000 (appx.)

Some Important Features :

Establishment of the Board of Secondary Education, and establishment of new Universities are some of the notable features of development during the last decade and a half. Work on the new schemes since initiated has been progressing briskly. Our progress in the different fields has not been inconsiderable from the quantitative point of view. But the fact remains that our seething population is much too big, and threatens to overshadow and overreach all our speculations and planning by the sheer weight of numbers. The galloping population of West Bengal has, for instance, increased by more than 93 lakhs during the decade 1951-61 registering an overall increase by 33%. This does, to some extent, explain the relatively disappointing progress in literacy from 24.5% in 1951 to only 29.3 in 1961. By and

large our problem today is twofold. On the one hand we have to meet the challenge of the growing population, and on the other to maintain the quality of education in the face of the onslaught of the quantity. Quality must not be sacrificed for equality in education.

Very Naturally the same trend holds good on the All-India level. Some statistics quoted below from the Government of India's reports show that educational progress has been more or less well maintained. The Fourth Plan envisages continuance of the trend, and recommends more resources for the same. Although much has been done, yet much more remains to be done. The menace of population-growth has in the meanwhile assumed alarming proportions, and unless this is curbed and checked our education-planning is bound to be reduced to futility.

Progress during the Plan-Periods

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Pry. & Basic Schools</i>	<i>% of 6-11 age group in attendance</i>
1946-47	1,34,966	30
1950-51	2,09,671	37·8
1955-56	2,78,135	42·6
1960-61	3,30,399	54·8
1965-66	4,08,930	69·2

The Fourth Plan aims at bringing 92·2% of the 6-11 age-group child-population to school. Thus universal primary education may be expected to be a *fait accompli* by the time the Fifth Plan is inaugurated, a redemption, though much belated, of the solemn pledge of our Constitution. Financial provision for the three stages of education during the three plan-periods was as follows :—

*Stages of
Education**Financial Provision*

	<i>1st Plan</i>	<i>2nd Plan</i>	<i>3rd Plan</i>
Primary	Rs. 85 Crores	Rs. 95 Crores	Rs. 209 Crores
Secondary	Rs. 20 „	Rs. 51 „	Rs. 88 „
Higher	Rs. 14 „	Rs. 48 „	Rs. 82 „

The problem of education in India today is both quantitative and qualitative. The following excerpt from the report of the Education Commission (1964-66) very succinctly summarizes the problem :-

“We would like to emphasize not the increase in enrolment but two other more significant and difficult aspects. The first is the reduction of wastage and stagnation. At present out of every 100 children who enter class I, only about half complete class IV. And only 34 complete class VII. We shall have to rectify the position and ensure that every child who enters class I will progress regularly from year to year and reach class V, and not less than 80 per cent reach class VII. Secondly, it is generally agreed that the standard of education given in the Primary Schools is unsatisfactory and that it imparts little beyond literacy. What is expected is that primary education should lay the foundation for a child to grow into a responsible and useful citizen of the country.”

EDUCATION IN THE FOURTH PLAN

Some important developments have taken place in regard to the future power and constitution of the main Planning Body. The Government of India, as announced by the Prime Minister in Parliament, have accepted the main recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission, and have taken two very important decisions in the matter. These are :

- (1) That the future Planning Commission will be a smaller and more compact body consisting of experts and subject-specialists. The politicians as such will be left out as far as possible.

This seems to be a wise decision. A Planning Commission so constituted will be in a better position than heretofore, to bring their special knowledge and skill to bear upon the formulation of the various plans and schemes with a greater sense of authority and confidence. Unobsessed by political considerations and party-pulls the Commission may be in a position to take a more objective and unbiased view of things.

- (2) Another important decision is that the Planning Commission will not, as heretofore, function as a policy-making or sanctioning authority. It will function as an advisory body only. The final authority shall rest with the Government.

During the first three plans, the Commission extended its power and authority step by step, and ultimately emerged as a super-ministry claiming its right to return its final verdict on all matters involving financial sanction. Matters came to such a pass that no plan could be undertaken without the

final assent of the Planning Commission. Even the Union Ministries seemed helpless on occasions.

Radical Change :

Although in the circumstances just stated, it is yet too early to forecast the shape, form and extent of the Fourth Five-Year Educational Plan in a clear and comprehensive perspective, broad indications are available regarding some radical changes that may take place in the coming years. Important changes are in the offing. Two or three very outstanding measures may just be referred to within the limited compass of an essay. Indications of the impending changes of a vital nature are plentifully available in the report of the last Education Commission popularly known as Kothari Commission. The report is a printed volume of considerable bulk. Attempts have been made to deal with all conceivable aspects of education, and the coverage provided is vast and comprehensive. The old and existing provisions in the field of education have been duly reviewed and assessed. New grounds have been covered, and conclusions with far-reaching implications have been drawn up.

The Language Formula :

One recommendation, in particular, has stirred up a good deal of public interest. The Commission recommends that education at all stages should be imparted through the learner's mother-tongue. The so-called language formula has been engaging serious public attention for over a decade now. The recommendations, in brief, are that a child should be taught during the first five school-years through the medium of his mother-tongue, and that the mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction at all levels—nursery, school, college, University and even in the specialized lines of study, namely, Law, Medicine, Surgery, Science, Technology and Commerce etc.

This change, seemingly revolutionary, is after all neither original nor new. No independent people educate their children through the medium of a language other than the children's mother-tongue. An English or a French child wherever and amongst whomsoever he may be, grows up as an Englishman or a Frenchman. The national language is the vehicle of the nation's aims and aspirations. The objections to a foreign language medium are not only sentimental but derogatory to national prestige. It is the birth-right of a child to learn to express himself in his own mother-tongue. To deprive him of this fundamental freedom is to cripple his natural growth by setting up an artificial barrier between the child and the world of learning. The amount of time and energy that an average child spends in acquiring the rudiments of English in our country is disproportionately long and exhausting. The best part of his school-life is devoted to learning a foreign language, and even then he cannot learn it properly. The advocates of the mother-tongue medium emphatically assert that much better justice could be done to the other subjects had not English taken the lion's share in time and attention. Their other argument is that if the ground-work in the mother-tongue be well laid, it is far easier and quicker to acquire another language at a later and maturer age. The three language formula, adopted by the Govt. of India, means that every student will have the opportunity of having his education through the medium of his mother-tongue at all levels—from Primary to University. One other language English or Hindi and any other non-Hindi Indian language (for the Hindi-speaking people) will also have to be learnt during the school years. Hindi as the official language of India should be studied by the non-Hindi-speaking people as a medium of communication with the rest of India. Hindi would be the common link language between the people of the different States. Hindi, as visualized, is to replace English in course of time. On its proper development and cultivation the integration

of the country will largely depend. For the interim period, the duration of which is yet a matter of guess, English will continue to stay as an associate official language. The implication of this decision is momentous for more reasons than one. This is expected to serve as a fillip to the development of the regional languages inasmuch as books now not available in these languages on scientific, technological, engineering, agriculture, accountancy, business and commerce etc. will have to be written either in original or translated.

Place of English :

In the meantime, English and desirably other modern foreign languages will also have to be assiduously cultivated not as a mass-language but as the medium of international understanding and communication. It has been called the library language. English in particular, and other progressive foreign languages in general, are our windows to the outer world. It will be suicidal to close these windows, and thus shut ourselves up within our own little walled cell.

Neighbourhood School :

Another outstanding change envisaged in the Fourth Plan relates to the courageous proposal for socialising education. The educational 'apartheid' now being perpetuated through the so-called public schools, and schools for the children of the wealthier section of the community is an outright contradiction of the professed socialistic aim of our State. These schools promote snobbery and sow the seeds of social disparity. The Kothari Commission recommends the establishment of "neighbourhood schools", where children irrespective of their parent's social status or family financial standing, will have their education on a footing of equality. The old Public School idea, which is an exotic from England, does not obviously fit into the socialistic pattern of life which we profess. The schools must

lay the foundations of social equality. If this scheme succeeds, one forward step towards the achievement of our socialistic objective will be taken.

Teacher-Education :

In West Bengal in 1966 there were about 34,000 Primary schools with a total enrolment of nearly 32,00,000, and about 3,000 Secondary schools with an enrolment of 12,00,000. The number of Primary teachers in West Bengal is over 1,10,000 and that of Secondary school teachers nearly 40,000. But the percentage of trained teachers in West Bengal in comparison with that in other states is deplorably low.

Except for Jammu & Kashmir and Assam all the other States are well ahead of West Bengal. For example,

Secondary Schools

Punjab	— 96%
Kerala	— 89%
Madras	— 86.3%
Andhra	— 82.4%
West Bengal	— 35.6%

Teacher-training is essential for several reasons :

Let us agree that a teacher is born and not made. Even then the born teacher will be better fitted for his job by training. Training gives confidence, widens the horizon and promotes the qualities for social leadership.

Some indications of the changes to be made in the system of Teacher-Education are available in the Kothari Commission's report.

- (1) Breaking the isolation from the regular faculties of the University, and the neighbouring schools, and upraising the status of the Training Colleges.

- (2) Co-ordination between the different Training Colleges and co-operation with the local schools.
 - (3) Comprehensive Training Institutes—integrated training courses for the Primary and Secondary teachers.
 - (4) Difference between Education and Pedagogics. Introduction of two-year training courses for Primary and Secondary school teachers.
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BASIC EDUCATION : THE PIONEER SPEAKS

The late Dr. Zakir Hussain was a pioneer and path-finder in the realm of creative education. As an ally of Mahatma Gandhi, it was he who translated the Mahatma's Basic Education theory into clear and concrete educational terms. While controversy and to some extent confusion still rage round this non-traditional system, Dr. Hussain's masterly exposition of the concept and succinct analysis of the problems of Basic Education as embodied in one of his public addresses will help clarify the issues involved. The address was delivered at Tamil Nad Basic Education Conference held sometime in 1964. A gist of the address is as follows :

The most widely known thing about Basic Education is the principle that productive craft-work should be the main instrument of education. People usually seem to remember rather clearly that it should be manual craft-work and a little reluctantly that it should be productive, that is, economically productive. But most people, even those engaged in basic education work, tend to forget that this work should be the main instrument of education. It is not an end in itself, but a means to the education or cultivation of the mind.

This causes endless confusion. It leads on the one hand to some sort of a belief in the sanctity of just any manual work as an educational ritual. It tends on the other to a denial of manual work as in any sense educative, as just a waste of time and energy to please some people who don't know a thing about education. It would be very useful if those engaged in Basic Education and, therefore, committed to the making of productive manual work the main instrument of the education of children

between the ages of 7 and 14 were to be clear about their position.

Work is the only instrument of effective education. It may sometimes be manual work, or other non-manual work. Although it is work alone that can educate, yet all work does not educate. There is manual work that educates and there is manual work that does not. There is non-manual work that educates and non-manual work that does not. Educators should be concerned only with work manual or non-manual which educates, and may appropriately designate it as educationally productive work, that is work which helps in the cultivation of the mind and in the shaping of character and personality.

Four Stages :

Work that is educationally productive has usually four stages :—

- (1) A clear understanding of what is to be done, the consciousness of a problem.
- (2) The formation of a plan of execution, the choice of the appropriate among the alternate means and thinking out of the various steps in which the work has to be accomplished.
- (3) The actual execution of the work.
- (4) Self-criticism of the result of the work in relation to the objective set under No. 1.

In manual work of an educative nature, only the third step, the actual execution of the work, is manual, the other three stages involve mental exertion. In non-manual educative work all the four steps consist of mental activity. This mental activity in the first case as in the second contributes to the training of the mind, and to making it capable of tackling similar problems more easily and confidently when they present themselves later. The educative mental activity can accompany a piece of mental

work, it can accompany the making of a definitive moral choice, it can accompany the solving of a theoretical problem. It is this activity which produces a development in the process of logical thinking, a great step forward in the education and cultivation of the mind. It is this activity which helps the naive and easily satisfied logical processes of the child into a careful, self-critical, methodical process. Education manual or non-manual, should deem it its first concern to provide ample opportunities for the exercise of this activity in order to ensure care, constancy and thoroughness in thinking. A school, be it a book-school or a work-school, that does not provide such opportunity in ample measure may be a good information shop or a good workshop, but it is not a place of education. Neither information nor skill can be considered synonymous for education. Indeed information and skill are not even reliable measures of education. In order to make them education effective in the cultivation of the mind, we have to make a distinction. Information can be knowledge which someone else acquires by his mental effort but which has been passed on to us readymade as information. Or it can be knowledge that has come to us by our own effort. It is the same with skills. They can either be just mechanical skills attained by imitative diligence, or they can be based on natural disposition and deliberate effort to achieve an end. The first kind of information or skill is addition from outside, the second an enrichment and transformation from within. The first represents an external appendage, the second denotes internal development. One is instruction, the other education. One is outside polish, the other essential culture. The one can be had at any information shop or workshop, the other at place of education that provides opportunities of mental work spontaneously undertaken with consequent habits of careful and thorough thinking.

These opportunities of spontaneous work, be it remembered, do not rule out traditional knowledge and mechanical

skills. They make even these things meaningful in their context. There is a lot of these stored up by the community in the course of its history. They can be used to work out the self-willed project easily and effectively. But their acquisition should be motivated by the self-willed activity. Educative work should be constantly reinforced by traditional knowledge and mechanical skill.

School of Work :

What is the import of these rather abstract observations? Two relevant consequences emerge. The first is that the Basic school as the school of work need not be regarded as something quite outside the general educational considerations. All educational institutions, yes, all, have to be places of productive work—the Basic schools and all other educational institutions. The peculiarity of Basic schools is that here manual work is the occasion and the instrument of educationally productive work. In other institutions, there may be, and indeed should be other occasions and other instruments besides manual work. This peculiarity of the Basic school is due to the extremely important consideration in the process of successful education, and that is due regard for the stage of development of the students—in this case boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14. Psychologists recognise three chief periods of development in early life, each more or less of 7 years' duration. The first period up to 7 years is the age of play, the second from 7 to 14 is the age of ego-centric and the third from 14 to 21 is the age of heterocentric interests of work.

None of these stages may be treated only as preparation for the succeeding. In education all preparation must at the same time be satisfying experience, and all satisfying experience is also a preparation. Manual work for the stage 7—14 has been chosen in view of the active and practical disposition of children in this age-range. Manual work here supplies

the best occasion and instrument of mental work which can educate. Three out of the four elements in education are mental. It also follows from this that it is thoroughly unwise to mix up the different stages of growth in an educational programme. It is unwise to mix up some of the years of the free stage up to 7 which is characterised by the play activity with the later stage which is characterised by a purposive, practical disposition. It is not satisfied with the carefree objectlessness of play, but sets an objective outside itself for attaining.

Cooperative Social Order :

This discussion also makes clear the desirability of continuing the Basic Education programme up to the age of 14, and not cut it short at 11 or 12. The arbitrary cutting short of the Basic Education programme after 5 instead of 7 years distorts in a considerable measure the image of Basic Education as an indivisible unit, and defeats the purpose of compulsory and free education to be provided by the State. If education were the parent's own personal concern and were confined, as for a long time indeed it was, to only a few, one could educate oneself as one pleased, and follow objectives diverging from each other to suit individual interest or whim. But when the State provides education for all the children of all the people, and requires them to have it, it obviously has some general social aims in view. Basic Education seeks to lay the foundation for a life of intelligent work in a co-operative social order which the Indian State seeks to establish. It does so by making educative manual work the main feature of that education. But it also seeks through Basic schools to make education a moral experience, and the school a place of moral and civic training. It seeks to bring home to its new generation the conviction that the work one does and the vocation one takes up is not just a device for earning a livelihood but is, indeed, an office of public service in a co-operative community based on the division of labour. It

seeks to do so by organising its schools as communities of work and life. It hopes to make work in such a school-community a form of social service which may help to build up a dedicated character. It hopes to see developed in this school community a certain social sensibility, and a certain delicacy of feeling. It hopes to lay the foundations of a sense of social responsibility. All these admirable objectives require for their realisation a certain duration, and above all a certain degree of maturity in the pupils. The objectives point to the desirability of continuing the school till a riper age. If the State plans to provide an eight-year period of compulsory education, then the 8 years from 7 to 15 would yield much better results than those from 6 to 14. When you begin to finish it earlier than the age of 14, it can be fatal to the purposes which justify compulsory education in the free society. If we don't just have the means to do this and can arrange only for five years of schooling, there should be no hesitation, in the light of the objectives of Basic Education, to prefer the 5 years from 9 to 14 to those from 6 to 11. It is good to have Basic schools which serve the purposes for which they are designed than to have truncated schools robbed of their specific quality. When you have done that, you would have done the right thing by Basic Education, and you could justifiably leave the pre-Basic and post-Basic stages to themselves. Pre-Basic and post-Basic are at best chronological but not educative concepts. The age period 7—14 has its own specific quality, and manual work has been introduced here as educationally productive work because of this quality. The demands of the pre-Basic and post-Basic stages will be different. The former is pre-eminentely the age of play as distinct from work, and the latter is a period of differentiation of aptitude, and seems to demand a system of diversified secondary schools. Yes, among these diverse types of secondary schools, there would be schools which will lay emphasis on manual work, schools for instance, with an agricultural or a technical bias. The post-Basic

schools which may have already been established, for want of necessary co-ordination, namely, where to send those who have finished the Basic school, should now be made into regular, well-quipped Higher Secondary schools with a technical subjects core. Moreover, the way should be clear from full-fledged Basic school to any Higher Secondary school.

Method of Teaching :

In regard to the method of teaching at the Basic schools there has been a great deal of confusion as to the scope and possibilities of what has been termed correlation. Now correlation is obviously a sound device. But exaggeration can make the soundest device look stupid. While discussing the significance from the educational point of view, of spontaneous self-willed projects of work, it is to be made clear that it has to be constantly re-inforced by traditional knowledge and mechanical work if spontaneity is not to flounder in the sands of interminable inconsequential effort. But the motivation for acquiring this traditional knowledge, and the mechanical skill should come from the self-willed tasks for accomplishing which they are the necessary means. The spontaneity of the end gives life and meaning to the means, and traditional knowledge and mechanical skill also become instruments of educationally productive work.

Use of Books :

Over-enthusiastic Basic Education advocates deprecate the use of books in Basic schools. But sometimes Basic school boys have been seen avidly reading with great advantage quite ten times as much printed material as they would do in an ordinary school, because their interest was aroused by some project of work they had in hand, and in whose completion the printed material could be helpful. Instead of a taboo on books, it is an urgent need of the Basic school that a whole body of literature should be

created which could be referred to by boys in the course of their work as welcome aids. Situations where such fruitful reference would be called for can be easily anticipated and booklets prepared and placed in the class library. Instead of one dreary text-book in language one will see a whole little library swallowed by the pupils with obvious appetite. Information will be put in its right place as a help in solving problems in which one is engaged. It will not be passively received but actively sought. This alone can make it educative.

No worthwhile reform in the educational system, specially at the stage when it is most extensive, is possible without those engaged in shaping it having a belief in the soundness of what they are doing. Belief, perhaps, is not the right word although it is more expressive than any other word. What is needed is an intelligent understanding of what they are doing, and an anxiety to make that understanding wider and deeper by a constant process of thinking and experiment, by elucidating and making precise the principles on which their work is based. Unless education is made continuous with life it does not and cannot, manifest its redeeming and life-giving qualities. This belief, this understanding, this conviction will give a sense of mission, transform work from dead routine to inspired education, and reward and enrich the teacher by giving him a sense of purpose as the servants and leaders of the people at a strategic point where he can help raise the whole social lump.

OLYMPIC GAMES : A LESSON FOR INDIA

India's sad discomfiture in the Olympic Games at Mexico (1968) has not only dealt severe blow to our national prestige, and given a sharp jolt to our placidity and self-complacence, but should also serve as an eye-opener, and impart a lesson of deep import and significance. It poses the question : why should India, the second largest country from the population point of view, be so poor in man-power potential ? Why should Indian youth fail so lamentably in the international arena of sports ? Our only hope hung on the slender thread of the Hockey, but that too snapped without much ado. The precariously earned bronze medal is no consolation, rather an insult to injury. About the performances of our sportsmen in the other events of the Olympic Games, the less said the better. The Indian national record-holders could not as much qualify in some of the preliminary hits. India's sportswomen were conspicuous only by their absence. Much smaller countries, Kenya and Ethiopia for example, fared quite well and earned the much-coveted gold medals. Some of the sportsmen and sportswomen even bettered their own previous records, and proved that man's prowess and physical stamina are almost illimitable. Compared to all these, India's position in the world of sports is but least inspiring.

Hockey had been India's monopoly for many years. But this spell of supremacy though challenged and threatened for quite a few years, has now been really broken. Soon after this debacle, a number of sports-pundits here and there have come out with pious platitudes. Their views ranging from feeble apologia to angry outbursts, provide an interesting bill of fare for those who care to consume it. The long and short of all the

hullabaloo, which now seems to be dying down, is that politics should be eschewed in the matter of selection of personnel, and that a more vigorous and comprehensive search should be made to discover real talents from a much wider circle than heretofore. The Union Education Minister, save for occasionally bemoaning our failures in cricket, foot-ball and hockey, has not yet offered any noteworthy constructive counsel for the healthy development of sports and sportsmanship in this country. The Ministry of Education, which rightly assumes the role of custodian of the country's sports and its State counterparts, the Education Departments, are not yet known to have formulated positive plans in this behalf. Without questioning the various theories and theses now being gleefully advanced by the sports specialists in regard to India's appalling deficiency in athletics, it is time to seriously review the problem from the educational point of view. Physical development as much as mental is, no doubt, a major concern of education. The people now in control of the Indian sports need to be re-oriented, and all unholy pseudo-political manoeuvrings for perpetuation of power by particular persons or groups should be put to an end. The earlier this is done, the better for Indian sports.

Work and Play :

'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' is an old and wishful aphorism, a pious profession rather than the real practice. Work is usually regarded as more important in human affairs than play. Work is the central focus, play is of peripheral importance. Work means the way to material success. Work is the real business of life, play is but a minor incidence, considered necessary just because unceasing work causes fatigue and monotony. Play provides a break, the much-needed interval to sustain interest and re-generate energy. Play is considered necessary to refresh and re-energise one for more study, yielding greater success in work. According to the prevalent concept

play occupies a place of only ancillary importance in the education programme. It is rather by sufferance than right that play retains its position. Education prepares one for work and work also educates. But play is essentially frivolous. It teaches little, and for all practical purposes contributes nothing to one's education. Growing mechanization is affording more and more leisure-time to the modern man. Automation has to a very large extent reduced human labour, and made it possible for the moderner to enjoy more free time than before. The social and emotional implications of such freedom need to be seriously investigated, so that the vacuum thus created may not be harmful but beneficial to man. Play absorbs a very high proportion of man's interest and leisure today. It is, therefore, imperative that serious thoughts be given to the problems of play, and deliberate action taken to educate men and women to use their leisure-time pleasurably and profitably.

But what is play ? Is it merely a kind of activity designed to fill the time-gap between work on week-ends, during holidays and vacations, on retirement from active service and so on ? Is it the rich man's hobby, who is not required to work for his living, and who has to save himself from the drudgery of time *sans* occupation ? The social and sociological impact of automation, that is, more leisure and less work obviously manifests itself in various forms of more exciting and sensational entertainment such as gambling, drugs, intoxication, sadistic pleasures and sexual indulgences etc. To combat these perversities, the educator strives to make discipline more rigorous, increase the load of academic work and impart instruction on morality. But none of these measures fully succeeds in achieving the desired objective. More often than not, the reverse is the result. These traditional measures of the pedagogue merely complicate the issues, and incite the tendency to escape from the rigour of discipline and instructional boredom. The way out lies elsewhere.

Educative Value :

The psychological and educative value of play should be properly assessed. The impulse to play is ingrained in human nature. The play-instinct indeed is the spring-head of cultural impulses. Language and literature, philosophy and religion, science and arts all originate from the play-impulse rooted in human nature. When the spirit of play withers, freshness, joy and spontaneity give place to humdrum routine, compulsion, monotony and a spirit of revolt. Leisure is best contemplated and carried out in play, and leisure and culture are hand-in-glove. In this context we must have a clear understanding of the meaning and *modus operandi* of play. Its proper placement in the scheme of education should be preceded by a careful analysis of its essential characteristics, that justify its impelling importance. First of all, play is voluntary and not subject to coercion or compulsion. Secondly, play has an element of joy, which follows automatically from its voluntary character. Thirdly, genuine play is not utilitarian or commercial but largely altruistic. Next, the element of contest that goads the player to try for a win, is there. Fifthly, play is the synonym for orderliness as opposed to chaos and haphazard activity. And finally, play is social. The players are obliged to follow the rules of the game. Play contributes to the growth and progress of a disciplined community. It is integrally connected with man's social evolution. Sportsmanship on the field permeates its spirit on a large scale off the field as well. So the poet says :

“When the great Scorer comes
To write against your name,
He writes not whether you win or lose
But how you play the game.”

Since education is concerned with the conservation and transmission of culture, it is necessary to evolve and evaluate the

educational process in the light of the close relation between culture and play.

The progress of education of the individual and the community is to be measured by the quality of play as the vital source of culture. The forenoted characteristics of play on a closer look, afford clues to the correct type of education. Voluntariness, for example, that is absence of compulsion leads on to the great goal, namely, kindling the love of learning that inspires and stimulates the learner to teach himself, and continue to learn throughout life. To play distinterestedly is to give up the gainful motive, and ignore the cash-value of education, which today dominates the field. Play and education as nurse and nurture of the creative potentials are intrinsically more valuable than the profit-motivated undertakings.

The self-defeating nature of the pursuit of practicality should now be realised, and all possible encouragement should be offered to the pursuit of learning for the joy of it.

Challenge is a precondition to growth, for challenge brings out the very best in man. It is through challenge that man overcomes inertia, and is stirred into action. But challenge or competition often leads to hostility towards the rival. Sport-motivated education encourages the right kind of competition, and teaches the competitors to regard one another with honour and respect. It teaches the competitors to put in greater efforts in the bid for supremacy whether in sports and games or in the pursuit of knowledge as equal partners in a common undertaking.

Order or discipline constitutes the core of play-like education. The joy and freedom inherent in play are transformed into eager and willing participation in the educational programme. Discipline as in play is more voluntary than imposed, the participant willingly abides by the law of his chosen behaviour.

Play for Mental Growth :

Leisure is not absence of work or idleness. It is essentially a kind of activity calculated to develop human qualities. The creative and cultural potentialities of leisure may be fully exploited through education oriented in the spirit of play. Play, therefore, is to be integrated into the texture of the educational practice and process. How that should be done calls for careful thinking and planning.

The education planner and administrator should first of all get rid of the commonplace concept that play is only a secondary adjunct to academic work. Play is needed not only for physical growth but also for mental development. Inclusion of play in the comprehensive school curriculum, and its recognition without reservation as a means to attain academic success and social status is the first requisite. So long as examination continues to be the main test of merit, performances in sports, P.T. and games etc. should be evaluated in the same manner as the text-book subjects. While a book-scholar is assured of social prizes, the sportsman may be disposed of with a backpat. This is not to be. Play should be part and parcel of the academic curriculum. Any educational institution worth the name will have to adopt it and work it out. This means a complete and courageous reshuffle of the school organisation.

On this hypothesis, we may look forward to a future school system that would remove the present imbalance between over-emphasised academic exercise and cinderella-like games and sports. The new system envisaged should be widespread and all-embracing. The search for talent would not then be a hectic pre-olympic hunt conducted by a closed coterie of vested interests pretending as sports-patrons and specialists, but would be a genuine and sustained national endeavour to discover and train sportsmen of the coveted calibre.

TEACHER-EDUCATION : A PROGRESSIVE VIEWPOINT

“He who can, does ; he who cannot, teaches.”

This famous or rather infamous piece of satire by George Bernard Shaw once created a good deal of flutter in the educational dovecots. The controversy is by no means over. It still rages, and that with a degree of pungency. The general academician uses it as a handle against the teacher-educator. The notion still prevails in the academic circles that teacher-educators are no compeers of college or university teaching personnel. Teachers of Degree Colleges oftentimes develop symptoms of allergy against teacher-education. A degree in Education is not treated as on a par with the corresponding academic degree, nor is it so in Departmental evaluation. A further clause is added to lend Bernard Shaw's malicious satire a still more mischievous slant : “He who cannot teach, teaches teachers.” That such sweeping remarks will provoke resentment there can be no doubt about that. But mere resentment and rebuttal however powerful and well-reasoned are not enough to wash out the stigma. A close and careful examination of the problem is needed. It is needed in the best interest of the teacher-educator himself. It is needed to establish his position firmly and honourably in the vocation he has adopted. It is also needed to strengthen his professional skill and ability, and that is the best possible safeguard against onslaught from within as well as without.

Vocational Skill :

One inherent weakness in the position of a teacher-educator

lies perhaps in the fact that once he enters the "hallowed halls of ivy," he loses contact with the down-to-earth problems. The Professors and Lecturers of the Teachers' Training College have not only to keep themselves abreast with new pedagogical theories and techniques, and explain them to the teacher-pupils, but also, and more so, to cite actual experiences, and demonstrate how practically to negotiate the problems.

This point may very well be illustrated with the help of an analogy. A successful teacher of Physical Sciences is one who not only expounds scientific theories and laws, but also empirically proves them by demonstration in the laboratory. In most professions, those who prepare neophytes have not only to acquire fresh and first-hand knowledge of the theory but also of the art and skill of the vocation. A professor of surgery, for example, must not spend all his time in the class-room delivering lectures, however enlightening. By far the major part of his duty consists in demonstrating his skill in the operation theatre. The most brilliant expositions and detailed texts are no substitute for the master surgeon removing a tumor from the brain of a living person. From the student's point of view learning by seeing is more vivid, and hence more effective than learning by hearing.

The role of a teacher-educator in the proper social perspective is not less important. As the professor of surgery deals with the physical organs of living people, the teacher has to deal with the development of their minds and souls. His function in a sense is more delicate and difficult. In-so-far as the progress and performances of the teacher-educator are concerned, the same *modus operandi* as the aforesaid should apply.

Young Education-graduates on first entry into the profession are usually advised by the older veterans "to forget all they had been told in the Training College about how to teach. That was all sweet fiction. The cold facts are otherwise."

Such gratuitous advice is not always delivered or accepted in good spirit. A sense of frustration manifests itself by implication. Nevertheless the element of truth contained in the piece of advice is undeniable. The question that comes foremost is how much do the Teacher Training Colleges try to grapple with the matter-of-fact problems of school-education. To name a few, these problems are : student-indiscipline, teacher-unrest, text-book muddle, falling standards of instruction, ill-nutrition, lack of facilities for games, sports and recreation and the like.

The Training College Lecturers deliver talks on school-teaching, on the situations that the teachers have to face, on adolescent needs and problems etc. But they themselves are very seldom face to face with these problems. How often do they confront the teen-agers in the class-rooms ?

On-the-spot Study of Problems :

How often are they required to tackle the situations on the spot ? There may be some past experiences in individual cases, but being safe and secure within the walls of the Training College for a number of years, the Education-Professor is bound to recede farther from realities in the course of time. It is not always useful to draw upon the past experience. The problems of the living present have a more direct bearing upon the educational scene. It is, therefore, imperative that the Education-Professor should keep himself in constant practice. It is not enough to keep oneself acquainted with the up-to-date ideas and techniques dished up through books and journals. Theoreticians suffer from the limitation of second-hand information gleaned indirectly and impersonally. It is essentially necessary to renew and refresh one's experience by periodical contacts with the current problems. On-the-spot study of the problems is definitely superior to arm-chair reviews. The Education-Professor should, therefore, return to class-room teaching as a matter of regular duty and as often as possible.

A well thought-out programme comprising the following items needs to be adopted for the purpose :

(i) Visits of inspection by the Education-Professors to the Elementary and Secondary Schools. Such visits will bring the Education-Professors in direct touch with the schools and their constituents.

(ii) The Teacher's College should adopt one or more schools assuming full responsibility of running and maintaining the same. The Education-Professor should set apart time for class-room teaching.

(iii) The Education-Professors should conduct demonstration classes from time to time. It is not too difficult for the subject-specialists to meet at a certain school at a given time and witness various methods and techniques being put into practical operation. This should be followed up by exchange of notes.

(iv) To hold regular give-and-take conferences of the Education Professors, School-Supervisors and the School Teachers. Such exchanges will help bring to an end the traditional conflicts of opposing views amongst these personnel. Such a programme is likely to improve public relations, and enable the Teacher-Educator to face his problems with a greater degree of realism and confidence.

Some recent trends of thinking on teacher-education as contained in the Robbins Report (1961) are well worth recalling in this context. One of the recommendations of the committee is to remove the age-old barrier between the general academician and the teacher-educator. To this end Teacher-Training Colleges are to be renamed Colleges of Education. These should be larger in size than heretofore, and have a four-year degree course, and be more closely linked with the Universities. There should be full-fledged Faculties of Education in the Universities.

The Robbins Report further recommends that the teachers

of the Degree Colleges should also be offered facilities for some kind of training in the art and technique of lecturing and conducting discussions and seminars etc.

And thirdly, the Universities should have Institutes of Education to promote co-operation between the University, Education-College, Local Education Boards and other educational interests.

SOME PROBLEMS OF TEACHER-EDUCATION

The terms 'teacher' and 'educator' being more or less synonymous, the now frequently used expression teacher-education sounds somewhat paradoxical. One may feel inclined to regard these expressions as an example of tautology, the primary object of which is to bring certain degree of emphasis to bear upon the question of professional competence of teachers. One is also led to entertain some misgivings about the all-out importance now being attached to the question of teacher-training.

Gokhale's Views :

A student of history may recall what Gopal Krishna Gokhale the eminent savant and educationist said in presenting the Bill for introduction of universal and compulsory education in India. Gokhale said :

"For the purpose of giving the most elementary education, imparting a knowledge of the 3 R's, I think even untrained teachers are not as useless as they are depicted. Most of the Indian members in this Council (Imperial Legislative Council) received their primary education under untrained teachers. How did we receive our primary education ? I remember how I did it. We used to squat on the floor with a wooden board in front of us, covered with red powder and a piece of stick to write the letters with.

... ..

For God's sake do not wait for your trained teachers and for decent school houses, till you take up the question of removing illiteracy from this land."

An Obvious Conclusion :

But the importance of teacher-training is not to be over-

looked nor underrated. Teacher-training is a matter of crucial and fundamental necessity. The notion now universally current is that teaching is to be regarded as a technically specialised and professional job, and its worth as such, as well its impact upon society are to be evaluated by the efficient and efficacious training of the teacher himself. The only purpose at the back of quoting Gokhale from old records is to pin-point the fact that the state of progress of fundamental education in this country even after more than sixty years today is not less dismal than what it used to be. The conclusion to be drawn is obvious.

Profession and Mission

Looking upon teaching as a profession with all the implications that the term stands for, there is no gainsaying that professional training for such personnel calls for very careful consideration and treatment. But before launching upon an examination of the salient problems of the profession, it is necessary to take note of the distinction usually made between a profession and a mission. A profession is commonly regarded as the very antithesis of a mission. The view prevails that profession is money-motivated, whereas mission is inspired and dedicated to a cause regardless of personal gain and ambition. The distinction thus made, though not wholly unsubstantial, admits of exceptions as well as extenuations. Even a professional, who is paid for his work, may have the urge and outlook of a dedicated missionary, and should as such, be given the appreciation that is his due. The mere fact that one works and earns for his livelihood should not be the reason why his image should be tarnished. It is the spirit that really counts. A religious missionary naturally enjoys public esteem. The lure of a name, public respect and reputation, may more often than not, lie at the back of his real urge and motivation. A real missionary of the calibre of Dr. Albert Schweitzer who

spent almost all his life in quest of the supreme purpose of life in the service of suffering humanity in the wilds of Lambarene in Central Africa is one of the very rare instances of history. One cannot generalise upon such exceptions. On the other hand a professional or a salaried worker, who earns for livelihood, but works for a cause is as good as a missionary. Between an honest professional and a missionary no invidious distinction need be made. A teacher is professional in the sense that he earns his livelihood, and missionary because he renders a most vital social service. Everything depends upon sincerity of purpose and spirit of altruism. Judged by this standard there may be more missionaries to be counted amongst the teachers than among the religious preachers and so-called missionaries. Even the church today is but a career.

Concept of Teaching :

Now starting with the postulation that simply for being a professional, a teacher should not be excluded from the benighted category of a missionary, the correct concept, and true meaning of teaching as a profession needs to be properly explained and appraised. The high responsibility that devolves upon teaching as a profession should first of all be viewed in its pragmatic perspective. Ill goes the wind that blows around the commonplace teacher-agitation on trade-union lines. Paid membership of an association of teachers gives the teacher the label of professionalism. One becomes professional by paying dues to the national, regional, local and various other associations. Nothing surely can debase the status and prestige of the profession more than such clap-trap agitational methods.

In fact professionalism entails technical responsibilities and obligations more than claims to certain material gains. Teacher-Education essentially is, and should be teaching with certain definite as well as definitive objectives. These objectives need expression in clear and categorical terms.

- (i) Learning as to how to learn,
- (ii) Teaching as to how to teach,
- (iii) Teaching as to how to become professional.

Teaching is Learning :

Turning things inside out, teaching essentially is learning. Undue emphases are oftentimes imposed upon methods and methodology. Teaching is often formalized into patterns and rituals, known as plans publicized more widely than they are actually used. There is every reasonable doubt about the extent to which the well-known Dalton Plan was practised at Dalton. Teaching methods with all the paraphernalia of motivation, behaviour-study, projects, lesson-planning, drills and demonstrations, evaluation etc. are brought to bear upon the Teacher-apprentice in full impact. Like the maestro of a great orchestra, the trained teacher is expected to lead his pupils skilfully through the lessons reaching a veritable academic crescendo.

There is more than a modicum of truth in the statement that undue emphasis is laid upon methodology, and too little upon content and knowledge of subjects. Knowledge first and knowledge last is our contention. With that end in view the whole gamut of the teacher-education problems should in our opinion be divided into three stages.

- (i) Pre-Service Orientation Training,
- (ii) Professional Training,
- (iii) In-Service Training

Pre-Service Training :

As teaching is accepted as a full-fledged profession it is necessary to introduce education-biased courses at the undergraduate level. The undergraduates should first learn how to learn, and acquire appropriate attitudes. The pre-training

course should provide a basis for learning how to learn. 'How to learn' should in the logical context of things precede as well as accompany 'how to teach'. Learning without teaching may be permissible, but teaching without learning is absurd and to a degree, pointless and dangerous.

A teacher of art or of science must necessarily bring to bear upon the subject he teaches the full impact of his knowledge. Mastery of content is, by and large, the king-pin of progressive and purposeful education. Too much of stress on methodology at the expense of knowledge content is one of the grave perils of professional teacher-training.

Professional Training :

In a nutshell professional teacher-training really amounts to 'teaching how to teach.' Principles, theories and methods, organization of teaching, and history of education etc. should constitute the core of professional training. A member of the profession must know all that the profession expects of him. He has to adapt himself to certain professional ethics and discipline as well. Professional training, therefore, should cover both technical and academic subjects, as well as codes of professional conduct.

About the latter four things deserve special consideration.

- (i) Social and economic well-being of the members of the profession.
- (ii) Improvement of efficiency and quality of performance of the members.
- (iii) Educating and influencing public opinion in regard to educational developments.
- (iv) Protection of the legitimate interests of the profession from professional and non-professional onslaughts.

Professional training should, therefore, be broad-based and

include within its ambit not only teaching methods but also educational administration and financing, national planning, and studies in public relations etc.

In-service Training :

One of the best ways to maintain freshness and renew acquaintance with work-techniques is to go in for refresher courses from time to time. Training while in active service is calculated to keep interest alive, and to bring the recipient nearer to new development and innovations. Integration of the three stages, namely, pre-service, professional and in-service training provide the basis of teacher-education. Its aim, in brief, is to stimulate knowledge and to improve technical skill. Such training enables the teacher to take an increasing share in the discharge of his social obligations.

TEACHING THEORY & PRACTICE

The methods-courses in teacher-education present an intriguing problem all the world over. Practice and theory seldom coincide point for point. The differences between what is professed, and how that is put into practice continue to exist in spite of efforts to eliminate them through didactic devices. These differences are multiplied and magnified, and the blame is usually laid at the door of the 'Theory'. Theories on methodology are looked down upon as hypothetical having no relation to the realities of the situation.

The methods-courses tend to become impractical when attempts are made to solve problems on assumptions on *ad hoc* basis instead of taking into account the variables and their interrelation. The easiest and most usually adopted approach to class-room teaching is based upon an imaginary average. True, this approach may be unavoidable, but undoubtedly not unimpeachable.

Three points of view are current, that of the Methodologist Teacher-Educator, that of the Supervisor-cum-Cooperating Teacher and lastly, that of the Probationer himself. The methods-courses have been subjected to severe criticism both from within and from outside. The brunt of this attack is directed toward the Teacher-Educator, who dissertates. The theories are too theoretical and unrelated to the real situations. But teaching is a delicate and complex process involving human growth and conduct that admit of unlimited variations. It is hardly feasible to hazard generalizations about teaching process with empirical certitude.

The Supervisor-cum-Cooperating Teacher has also his dig

at the theory-monger. What they loudly proclaim is: the Lecturers may propound great theories and broach wonderful ideas, but more often than not, they haven't taught in schools for years, and their lofty ideas are entirely unrealistic and unworkable. Last, but not least, comes the probationer's own reaction to the assignment that confronts him. As he actually takes to teaching he finds that much that he had imbibed from his methods-Professor does not quite work out the way he had been told it would.

The available literature on pedagogy abounds in plans of action, situations and valuable guide-lines. But much of all this misses the mark insofar as the probationer is concerned. Any one without teaching experience fails to see the problem through the text-book and the lecturer before the problem actually confronts him. Like all the hundred tricks of the legendary fox, methodological theories or theories on methods go amiss. The would-be teacher starts teaching the way he himself had been taught. The method of teaching he reads about in books or is talked about in the professional course, is quietly given the go-by. These teaching habits, before long, take firm roots. The principles of learning and teaching are consigned to oblivion. The question as how to bring teaching-theories nearer to teaching-practices is now engaging the attention of the educationists. Time, it has been suggested, should be set apart to enable the probationer to be engaged in pretraining teaching practice. He should work with children to acquire understanding as to how children become motivated, and also how they behave in different circumstances. Pre-training teaching experience may help him rid himself of initial fear—fear that seizes him as he finds himself being watched by the students and the Supervisor/Examiner. Such experience may strengthen his self-confidence and ensure better performance in professional teaching.

The uninitiated would-be teacher placed in the class-room for the first time faces his class somewhat Columbus-like without knowing what perils and prizes await him in encompassing the uncharted 'Atlantic' of his mission. The following verse makes sensible reading in this context.

"I am my student's Bible
He reads me most of all.
Today he reads me in the class
Tomorrow in the hall.
He may be prodigy or slow
Or, only average be.
He may not read the book of books,
But he is reading me."

The faces before him present an interesting if not curious cross-section of humanity. There are bright and clever youngsters and there are showy ones. Some are unruly always bent on mischief of one kind or another, and some are quiet and apparently inconsequential—a motley assembly of variables and budding possibilities. Such a situation very naturally causes tension to the unaccustomed nerves. The probationer under training feels shaky and jittery at being watched by his pupils and being glared at by the critical Supervisor. His first day in the class-room often determines his future career.

Various suggestions have been put forth to bridge the gap between theory and practice. A few typical suggestions are :—

Take one child at a time. Work with a small group in planning and arranging a tutorial project.

Prepare a short demonstration.

Devise some creative procedure to help pupil learn a skill. Assume responsibility for carrying on the activities of the total class for a short period of time with the experienced subject-

teacher present before going in for practice-teaching as a part of the formal professional course.

Participation and more participation in different situations is what is needed to acquaint the new entrant in the profession with the varieties of problems he is likely to encounter. Learning and doing constitute another important aspect of teacher-education. Practical teaching may take place alongwith the methods courses, so that theory and practice may be compared and weighed in their mutual relationship. The trainees may then see the methods courses as a clearing-house for the solution of their on-the-spot problems of class-room teaching. This will enable the probationer to face the real discipline problems. This will interweave theory and practice and, help the probationer-teacher draw lessons from the various learning theories.

In the end it is but realistic to say that pre-training teaching experience will not solve all the problems of teacher-education. The gap between theory and practice cannot be completely bridged, but efforts towards narrowing that gap are welcome.

TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Considered from the point of view of time-perspective, education aims at training people to adjust themselves to the changing conditions of life. Educational training is, therefore, training both for the present and for the future. While it is comparatively easy to adjust oneself to the present, it is definitely more difficult to anticipate the future and to be prepared for the same.

The children now entering the Primary school, will reach maturity, and be in full possession of social, political and intellectual power by the year 2000 A.D., and then the world will change more radically than it ever did during any two to three hundred years in the past. Unprecedented and unpredictable developments in science and technology are fast transforming the face of the earth and conditions of life. The material, social and human implications of this transformation are obviously far and deep.

An Important Question :

The situation raises the very important question : what can education, from the kindergarten to the graduation stage, do for this growing generation to make them fit to face the world of their maturity with confidence ? The advance of science and technology imposes an increasingly heavy burden of responsibility upon education—education for children as well as adults. The experience and knowledge of today will be hardly enough for the future man to competently administer the world by 2000 A.D., which will be a highly cosmopolitan world. The backward coloured peoples of India, Africa, China, Indonesia, the Arabs

and others are destined to play a more dominant role in the coming century.

More Accidental than Anticipated :

Most of the epoch-making scientific inventions from the discovery of fire to the present-day electronics came as the least anticipated. The acquisition of 'new knowledge', which is the definition of science, is more accidental than anticipated. In most cases the society was taken by surprise. It was least prepared to receive them with immediate readiness. While the material changes wrought by outstanding scientific inventions such as electricity, the wireless, the television etc. are easily adapted to the needs of everyday life, their social and psychological impact upon society is not immediately appreciated.

A sense of confusion, uncertainty, psychological indifference and bewilderment follow. Excessive emphasis upon the material aspects of life seems to be the effect of the accelerated social change. And the change is beyond the control of the maladjusted man. Hard labour and incessant toil in the absence of machine-tools and mechanical gadgets, are bound to make man a mere beast of burden. Life is full of stress and strain. But press-buttons as substitutes for human labour and getting everything ready-made from factories are but a poor answer. Life is dull and monotonous. Machine culture is arid and stereotyped. The two principal purposes of automation are increased productivity and emancipation of the worker from perpetual servitude. But those thus emancipated are not sufficiently balanced by education to enjoy leisure when it comes suddenly. The vacuum created by the sudden suspension of manual labour, is filled by drinking, gambling and dissipatory activities. Social changes in the Western countries cannot keep pace with the rapid advancement of technology. The less advanced agrarian Afro-Asian countries where science and technology advances relatively slowly, may have better chances

of getting rationally adjusted to these changes. Our final aim should be to remove the sharp difference between enforced labour and the much longed for leisure. Our working hours should be more interestingly and creatively utilized.

Social and Moral Effects :

Thus, though technological changes alter the material conditions of life quickly and more visibly, the social and moral effects thereof are rather slow in coming, and perpetrate a good deal of friction in coming to stay. We may call it 'social lag'. Much of our social maladjustment and moral crises may be attributed to this 'social lag'. To clarify this particular point further, we may for a moment consider, for what educational and cultural purposes could the radio and the television be used, were it possible to perceive their possibilities a decade before their invention. The human values of science and technology needs to be properly assessed before profiteering and commercial interests come to establish monopoly.

It is really unfortunate that such powerful media of mass-communication as the cinema, the radio and the television are more or less pawns in the hands of profiteers and politicians. Their use for social, educational and cultural purposes is largely motivated by gainful business interests. During the last seventy years of its development, the cinema, for example, has failed miserably to produce anything above the level of entertainment and sensation. Its contribution in the field of creative art is neither noteworthy nor abiding. Unlike the stage and the dramatic art, the cinema and the television have not been able to initiate any new social, cultural, artistic or intellectual movement so far.

Anticipation of the Future of Science :

The educational and cultural potentials of science and technology should be more effectively exploited. One of the

ways is to anticipate the future of science as far as possible. The social and human consequences of scientific development will depend upon the way in which it is used. If we give no thought to the possible ways of utilizing science to promote the interest of humanity and peace, our society will be at the mercy of accidents, and confronted, as now, by the ominous possibility of complete annihilation by nuclear proliferation.

Anticipation or advance evaluation of scientific development is not so much an individual responsibility as the onus of the socio-educational institutions. The suggestion is that public institutions should study and foresee the shape of things to come. As a result of such studies and education of younger generations in these lines, the future society would not be taken unawares by the new developments. It will then be possible to educate private and public opinion, and formulate plans and policies for fully exploiting the more beneficial and comprehensive values and functions of science.

Study of Science Fictions :

In so far as the teacher-educators are concerned, a start may be made by encouraging and popularising the study of science fictions. This is particularly opportune, because standard science fictions (to name a few, the works of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells) are anticipations of the shape of things to come. Literary flavour mingled with scientific imagination makes such books absorbingly interesting and thought-provoking. There is every reason to believe that should materials be prepared and presented for the various age and maturity levels, these would evoke active response from the students and scholars. Such literature will enable the students to appreciate the social and human values of culture, and their interest in the purely scientific and technological materials will carry them over to their social and human aspects.

The Harmonious Man :

One of the primary duties of the teacher-educator, therefore, is to prepare his pupil for the future. It is to be conceded that it is more difficult than ever to know what that future may be. Only teaching that equips each individual student to tap all their own inner resources in addition to acquiring 'new knowledge' can squarely meet this challenge.

The image of the man of tomorrow is, that he should be a harmonious being capable of sound judgement, and being useful to the society be as useful to his own vocation. The school should have as its supreme objective that the young man and young woman leave it as integrated and harmonious personalities, not merely specialists and technicians. The development of general ability for rational thinking and sound judgement should be placed above acquisition of special knowledge of particular subjects.

NEED FOR REFRESHER COURSES FOR TEACHERS

The eminent British Educationist Dr. Richard Livingstone used a commonplace simile to emphasise the necessity of periodical review and recapitulation. A new motor car should be periodically and regularly serviced in order to be kept in trim and working condition. If constantly used without servicing, the car, however costly it may be, will soon deteriorate and go out of order. This is true not only in regard to a machine but equally so in regard to a man. "Constant vigilance is the price of liberty" is a well-known saying. Mental vigilance is the price of progress. Mental inertia is the other name for degeneration and decay.

In the academic sphere 'Refresher Courses' are meant for providing opportunities for

- (i) renewing acquaintance with the things previously learnt and subjects studied ;
- (ii) acquiring further knowledge and widening the horizon. It is common knowledge that much of the things so avidly studied at school and college unobtrusively pass into oblivion for want of cultivation. Knowledge becomes effective only by constant use.

Value of Knowledge :

The value of knowledge, like that of currency, lies in its circulation i.e. use. Knowledge not put to use is exactly as useless as buried treasures. Refresher courses, help teacher-educators recapitulate what they may have been told while receiving training. No learning is really effective unless tasted

in the light of practical experience. All training courses, despite their practical bias, suffer from snags of theoretical finesse. Things are conceived in an idyllic atmosphere of scholarly pedagogy. Much of the things introduced in course of the training remain divested from realities of the situation. These things await application in the field-service when the teachers go back to their jobs. Student-indiscipline, for example, which hangs fire these days, may be glibly discussed in the tranquil Training College Hall with a good deal of gusto. But many a teacher will find it no pleasant job to face a howling crowd of youngsters bent on mischief. The class-room solutions of the problem may not prove quite adequate to meet the actual situation. During a refresher course the teacher finds an excellent opportunity for reviewing, retesting and re-evaluating his knowledge in the light of his field experience acquired in the mean while. The refresher course also offers him an opportunity to exchange notes with other members of the profession. Apart from these generalities which may be applicable to all types of teacher-training, the point to be considered is whether refresher courses bear any special significance in relation to Basic Education. To go into this question is to recall once again the true import and concept of Basic Education.

Educative Craft Work :

Notwithstanding all the current controversies regarding the correct concept of Basic Education, the most widely accepted thing about it is that productive craft work is the main instrument of education. But people usually think that Basic Education is nothing but craft work. Some also think that this craft work should be economically productive and profitable.

But what many people forget is that as an instrument of education, work is a means to cultivate the mind. It must be clearly understood that all work does not educate. There may be manual work. There may also be non-manual work.

Some manual work educates and some non-manual work may also educate. The truth is that educationally productive work alone helps the cultivation of mental faculties, and formation of character and personality. Whether in a book-school or in a work-school, educationally productive work always involves four distinctive stages :—

- (a) A clear understanding of the nature, scope and quantum of the work to be done,
- (b) A concrete plan to be formulated for executing the work,
- (c) Actual execution,
- (d) Analysis and critical estimate of the work done.

The Basic School as a School of work need not be considered fundamentally different from a book-school. The one distinctive feature of a Basic School is that manual work provides facilities for educationally productive work. It is also a special characteristic of Basic Education that it strives to lay the foundation for a life of intelligent work in a co-operative social order.

Keeping these essential features of Basic Education in mind one need not go far enough to seek justification for holding refresher courses as a part of the Basic Education training programme.

Correlation :

Two important things should naturally come in for careful consideration in connection with the 'Refresher Courses'. Correlation which constitutes the core of Basic Education methodology may be discussed and reviewed in detail against the background of realities. Correlation is the high watermark of creative outlook in Basic Education. But for practical reasons correlation cannot be or should not be carried too far. Fetish of anything, however desirable, often makes even a nice and reasonable thing look absurd and foolish. The reviewers should

apply themselves to the task of ascertaining the possibilities as well as the limitations of correlation in relation to the different subjects.

In some quarters the notion prevails that in a work-school, books and printed reading materials are mostly redundant and useless. Work divested from knowledge is blind and mechanical, and knowledge without work is idle and fruitless. Educationally productive work may be planned and properly executed only with full knowledge about the work.

Knowledge is to be culled largely from books. Information passively received as gift from possible sources is mechanical. But information actively collected through study and understanding is knowledge. Books are the indispensable sources of knowledge. One important point to be discussed and considered at the 'Refresher Courses' may, therefore, be 'How to put the library books to their maximum possible use'. As a forum for exchange of experiences regarding success as well as failure, the Refresher Courses help remove misgivings and doubts, and avoid errors.

Such get-togethers of field-workers are also of immense social value. Of all the new schemes introduced in the wake of national independence, the scheme for Basic Education seems to be the most controversial one. Periodical reviews in the light of the workers' own practical experience are by all means the best way to remove doubts and discover the right path.

Cultural Missions in Mexico :

An interesting experiment in securing higher technical standard among the teachers already in service, without interrupting their work was carried out in Mexico about 40 years ago. This experiment was prompted by the need for training fresh teachers in view of the rapid growth of rural education. This well-known experiment called the 'Cultural Missions' aims at improving professional qualifications for the practice of teaching.

Groups of picked teachers spread out over the countryside and hold refresher course camps for four to six weeks for the benefit of the untrained teachers. These selected teachers are specialists who can give practical instruction in important crafts and industries. Primary Schools alone are not enough to transform the village. Hence without trying to orientate Primary Education the Cultural Mission aims at transforming the physical and human environment in which the new generation is growing up.

In general terms the Cultural Missions try to stimulate development of initiative and the moral and physical resources of the individual, the family and the whole community to combat poverty, to improve the people's health, to raise the level of home-life and to encourage good relations. But the most important part of the Mission's work consists in a determined drive against ignorance of all kinds. The Mission seeks to develop general culture through literacy campaigns. The Mission establishes Primary Schools where there are none, establishes small village libraries, and organizes social centres. To a large extent the programme of the Mission resembles that of our Community Development Project. But one outstanding difference between the two lies in the fact that in the 'Mexican Mission' leadership is exercised by the school teachers. The Community Development leadership is more executive than educational. This difference means a lot.

ADMINISTRATION IN A TEACHERS' COLLEGE

Is discipline to be taken for granted in a Teachers' Training College? Are administrative problems non-existent in institutions solely concerned with sober and responsible adults? A notion of this kind enjoys fairly widespread prevalence. Many assume that a state of tranquillity is but obvious in a Teachers' Training College because the problems of adolescent truancy and youthful imbalance do not just exist in an institution of the grown-ups. The age of the interns is undoubtedly a vital factor in institutional discipline. Maturity and emotional stability usually go together. Here in the Training College the administrator has not to deal with the children and the adolescents nor with the youths in their prime. The trainees are long past the school and the college age, and have also tasted the sweets and bitters of work-a-day life. They have attained emotional stability. Some of them had themselves faced the vexed problems of discipline and administration in the schools wherefrom they have been deputed. The logic is apparently irrefutable. Subject to certain qualifications and reservations the position in regard to discipline is rather simple in an institution attended by the adults. This is specially so, because the teachers who come in for professional training, have to be aware that adverse internal assessment might prove ruinous to their career. Maturity of age, experience and the trainee's anxiety for a clean bill of conduct almost compel him to be law-abiding and outwardly docile and disciplined. Brevity of the period of training is yet another guarantee for discipline in the Training College. It is barely ten months' time during which a two-year course has got to be intensively

pursued. The academic pressure is much too heavy to allow dissipation of energy and waste of time over non-academic trifles. But then there are certain other things equally problematic. While the surface may look calm and placid, strong undercurrents may spell disaster for unwary swimmers. The teacher-pupils bring with them some inhibitions as well as fixed ideas. Age is no insurance against irrationality. Even grown-ups are susceptible to temperamental maladjustments, and psychological complexes. Having so long taught, and talked to others, some do not take the reverse position as a matter of course. They feel somewhat embarrassed, maladjusted, and suffer from an attitude of egoistic inferiority. This state of the mind often manifests itself in silent recalcitrance, irritation and irrelevant argumentativeness.

The teacher-educator has to take note of all this, and the most that he can do is to make the trainees feel at ease through friendly approach and reasoned counselling and understanding. The problem of youthful indiscipline makes room for adult ego and ill-adjustment. The remedy, therefore, does not lie in the maxim of the ferrule. There may be no indiscipline in the physical and behavioural sense. But problems all the same are there. The remedy is more psychological than that of routine-administration.

Special Problems :

Student-indiscipline apart, the administration of a Teacher Training College throws up some special problems of its own. Before attempting specification of these problems, one must understand what administration in the general sense connotes. Three principal things are involved in the administration of any educational institution. These are money, men and ideas. Money is essential for establishment, maintenance and improvement of the institution. If it is a state-owned and managed one, money is provided in the State budget. In the case a non-

State institution endowment, benefaction and fees are the usual resources. Budget-making of course is the most important thing, and budgets may be of three categories, namely, surplus, balanced and deficit. Deficit budgeting is resorted to in the case of a developing institution in particular. Expenditure is to be broadly categorized—recurring and non-recurring. The fundamental principles of audit such as expenditure within the budget, no expenditure without authorized sanction and non-transferability of allotment from one head to another should meticulously apply to non-State institutions as well.

Man as the maxim goes is above everything. This is true but not wholly true. There may be men bent on implementing certain projects, but if the wherewithal be lacking, mere enthusiasm and competency cannot hold on for long. There are plenty of instances of good schemes fizzling out for want of resources, and that in spite of the best intentions of the planners and executors. Can a first-rate engineer build up a dam without money, men and materials ?

Money and materials will likewise go waste without manpower to put them to proper use. Selection of the right type of men to run the administration is a matter of paramount importance.

Calibre and Qualification :

What is needed of a capable and successful administrator is a high degree of stamina and professional dedication. Stamina in the context of administration of an educational institution stands for endurance, sustaining power and patience. The Administrator or the Principal must create a climate of usefulness and constructive leadership. The Heads of Government offices may pass for worthy officers by the standard of their file-disposal performance. But routine file-disposal has very little relevance to the running of an educational institution. The administrative head of an institution should first and last be a

man of vision and initiative quick to grasp and decide upon a problem. He does not flinch from taking risks where necessary. Professional competency is a matter of advantage for the leader of a professional college. Knowledge and professional eminence places him naturally above his colleagues. This is an initial advantage. The leader must at the same time be conscious of his personal shortcomings, and instead of trying to conceal them, should rather try to make good this deficiency by bringing to his institution personnel of quality and competence. A man of character need not be afraid of his co-workers' qualities. The true leader not only appreciates but also inspires his lieutenants. The test of administrative efficiency is the amount of esteem that the leader is held in, and the confidence that he bestows upon his colleagues. The whole thing boils down to give-and-take in terms of captaincy and team-service. Good ideas and ideals fail because of inept and maladroit handling of problems and situations. In the final analysis administration is a human and humane problem. Human beings should never be treated as abstractions. The Head of a Teachers' Training institute must, of course, be a trained man himself. His past experience will be an asset. Training gives confidence, and experience is ability to avoid past errors.

From Man to Ideas :

Ideas emanate from man as much as ideas inspire and enthuse man. The head of the institution will fulfil his mission if he succeeds in creating a climate for development of ideas amongst the Faculty and his associates, from his own inner resources, from his reading and thinking, from fruitful association with other people, from the alumni, trustees, students and friends, he should seek ideas and new ideas and nurture them. Two processes are involved in idea-formation—susceptibility and non-susceptibility. A sensitive and susceptible mind tends to react quickly to every passing phase and phenomenon. Ultra-modernism and novelty for novelty's

sake are but a craze, and are non-conducive to creative idea-formation. The intake is quick, but the off-take is quicker, leading to nowhere ultimately. To be stoically impervious to new thought-currents on the other hand is tantamount to non-changeability and conservatism worse than the craze for change. The static and immobile state of the mind leads to stagnation and degeneration. A balanced mind, as in all cases, is capable of responding to and assimilating new ideas, and 'sifting chaff from the grain'. The process is steady, albeit a little slow like a rolling stone gradually acquiring a watermark.

It bears repetition that the most important thing about administration is, that above all it is human and humane. Without emotional awareness of the people's needs efficiency is of little consequence. Even infliction of penalty if penalty is at all indispensable, should be tempered with feelings of sympathy.

The purpose of punishment should be corrective and not punitive. Grudge and vengeance-motivated reprisals have no place in educational administration.

The Teacher Training Colleges being in most cases co-educational, pose certain special problems concerning the adult women. Certain physical and environmental requirements, privacy problems and emotionalism bordering on touchiness etc. are some of special problems that call for cautious handling. The services of women members of the staff should be utilized to tackle these problems. There must be some women on the teaching staff of a co-educational institution as a rule.

Co-operative Administration :

The new pattern of co-operative administration introduced in the Basic Training Colleges smoothenes the teacher-trainee relations to a considerable extent. These institutions are residential. The teachers and the trainees living in the same campus as they do, share the practical experiences of community living. Useful training in the art of self-government and self-

help is imparted through participation in cocurricular activities that highlight Basic Education. The principles of Basic Education are basically sound. Real discipline is not imposed, it grows from within. Work and joy mingle together to render learning a pleasant experience. Safeguards against the possibility of overdoing may, however, be necessary, lest informalities degenerate into a go-as-you-like conduct, and fraternization into lifeless flippancy.

SCHOOL INSPECTION : A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

An Inspector is commonly looked upon as the watch-dog of school administration. He is an authority over the school, and undoubtedly the authority that counts most. The whole range of an Inspector's duties in some cases specifically set forth in the Education Code, but largely undefined and, therefore, elastic and expansive starts from the basic concept of an authoritarian control. The very title 'Inspector' conjures up the vision of a high and mighty personage, charged with minute probing into the working of a school. Inspection in this traditional sense smacks of an act of fault-finding, and is as such viewed with apprehension by the school itself. Inspection has naturally tended to become more inquisitorial than constructive. The obvious psychological reaction to such operations on the part of the institution inspected is, therefore, one of aversion, dislike and avoidance.

A World Survey :

A sort of global enquiry into the present state of school inspection was instituted by UNESCO. The results of this enquiry have been embodied in a publication entitled : 'School Inspection : A comparative study'. Apart from the fact that such an enquiry is entirely novel in its scope and terms of reference—perhaps the first of its kind ever undertaken, it sums up within an admirable compass the various aims and objects, method and technique of this important educational operation prevailing in different parts of the world from 'China to Peru'. The forms and methods of inspection as practised in 66 countries

come under the purview of the study, which makes quite interesting and stimulating reading.

In view of very wide diversities and almost endless varieties in the principle and practice as revealed in course of the enquiry, it is hardly possible to attempt a systematic classification of the duties and functions of the Inspector. These range from improving school-attendance to delivering guidance lessons with an unnumbered variety of other responsibilities in between. Between administrative control and technical guidance there is more often no clear-cut demarcation. There is overlapping, and oftentimes preponderance of the one over the other. The UNESCO Survey does, however, present quite an interesting cross-section of the scope and character of Inspection all over the World.

In the Ukraine, for example, the Inspectors visit the homes of non-attenders if they consider it necessary, accompanied by parents, who participate actively in the social work of the school, members of the local Soviets and members of the Communist Organizations and Trade Unions. The Inspector's duties in most countries include intervention in staff-administration. In India the Inspector of Schools has powers of transfer, dismissal and appointment of teachers. In Viet Nam the Inspector recommends reward and honorary titles for the teachers. In Cuba the Inspectors have to see that the teachers actively participate in the School Extension Programme. The teachers have to deliver popular lectures on Civics, Economics and Social subjects for the edification of the general public. The Inspectors also keep the provincial educational authorities informed of political and religious activities of the schools. In Mexico, the Inspector's duties are not all confined to the school. The Inspector has to work for the improvement of health and family-life, encourage patriotic demonstrations and purification of the national language, and strengthen the national morale.

In Brazil an Inspector visits a school every three weeks, and conducts tests and examinations, registration and transfer. In the U.K., the Netherlands and Sweden the average frequency of Inspection is comparatively low. In the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Inspectors have to see that public money is properly spent for the purposes for which it is voted, to help the teachers by suggesting new ideas, and to organize and conduct Teachers' Training Courses. The Inspectors also advise the Ministry on local problems, supply information on new methods and experiments. They are also responsible for the preparation of educational pamphlets and bulletins. The British Inspectorate has been reorganized under the Education Act of 1944. The Inspecting posts have been thrown open to men and women. The Inspectors are transferable but not too frequently. One may not be kept in charge of one particular School area for more than ten years. Subject to the general policies laid down by the Minister, especially in respect of dealing with the Local Education Authorities, the Inspectors very largely act independently of any extraneous interference and political or party influence.

The position in the German Federal Republic (West Germany) may be summed up as follows :

Inspectors see to the observance of the State regulations, and also guide the teachers in the proper treatment of the curricula, programme and methodology. The Inspector's job, therefore, is highly technical.

The French system bears considerable resemblance with the German. An Inspector in France advises and helps the teacher in all problems related to education.

The Canadian system is a marked departure from the commonplace. The Inspector is being gradually relieved of his administrative responsibilities, and enabled to devote more and more time to counselling and guiding the teacher.

An Australian questionnaire elicits the teachers' reaction to the Inspector's visit to their schools. It is indicated that the main defect of the inspectoral system is that the Inspector does not stay on at a school sufficiently long to transmit the benefit of his experience. The teachers favour a change of emphasis from supervision to advice and suggestion.

The Indian System :

The Indian system of school inspection is a direct by-product of the English system of education, and has hitherto been more an understudy of the general administration than a purely educational affair. Not very long ago, an Inspector of Schools had to take instructions from the administrative head of the District or Division. In many respects the Inspectorate was subservient to if not under the control of the District Magistracy, and even an Inspector's posting and transfer were oftentimes effected at the instance of the Magistrate.

An Inspector was expected to carry out his special assignment in such a manner as would be in conformity with the general administrative policy. Even in purely departmental matters such as recognition of and financial assistance to schools, approval of teacher appointment etc., the Inspector was to a large extent guided by the consideration of political or administrative exigency. A school, for example, that had the temerity to hoist the tri-colour Congress flag on the 26th January in the pre-Independence days was unceremoniously struck off the grant-in-aid list irrespective of its academic record. The teachers and the students, who actively sympathized with or participated in the nationalist movement were blacklisted and debarred from Government service or recognition. Such things were but inevitable in a country under a foreign rule.

But even today, the old tradition and practice continue to hold ground to a very large extent. A Government educational institution will invariably have at the head of its management an

official preferably an administrative officer (*ex-officio*). This custom may have some advantage from the administrative point of view. In these days of scarcity and rationing, a Magistrate-Chairman of the Governing Body may help the institution in procuring land or building materials for its expansion, and pull more weight with the concerned authorities than a non-official does. But apart from the trivial material advantages, there is hardly any weighty justification for an educational system being made to play a second fiddle to the general administrator. At the District level the Inspector of Schools or the Education Officer holds a position inferior to that of the District administrator. A district head, if he so wills, may put his finger on every educational pie. The inspectorate has had no opportunity to grow and develop independently, nor learn to exercise its authority in the full measure of confidence.

Wrong Emphasis :

The emphasis being laid too much on the administrative aspect, the importance of the constructive and academic aspect of Inspection has come to be sadly neglected. A sample study of the routine inspection reports on the Secondary Schools in West Bengal makes disappointing reading. Inspection is made mainly for two reasons : (i) in connection with recognition of a newly-started institution, or renewal of provisional recognition once accorded, and (ii) award of grant-in aid or renewal thereof. The inspection forms with their usual columns are filled in with statistical details. The constitution of the Managing Committee is examined, teachers' qualifications are checked up, the accounts are examined, and at the end of the report quite a considerable catalogue of lapses and shortcomings is drawn up with a flourish.

These 'drawbacks and shortcomings' are mostly commonplace, stereotyped and sometimes unrealistic and unpractical. The same set of conditions are repeated year after year. Inspec-

tion reports for several years in succession on three particular High Schools for Girls in Calcutta, may be taken as typical. As is usual in these days, these schools hold morning sessions as sub-tenants of Day Schools for Boys in rented premises. The conditions set forth each year are :

- (i) The class-rooms should be more commodious so as to provide per-pupil floor-space of 10 sq. ft.
- (ii) Sanitary arrangements should be improved. There should be some more lavatories for the students.
- (iii) The school should have a play-ground of its own so that games and P.T. exercises may be properly organized.
- (iv) All male teachers should be immediately replaced by women teachers.
- (v) Qualified Music and Physical Education-trained lady teachers should be appointed.
- (vi) The School Library should have more books on teaching.
- (vii) There should be a classified library for each class.
- (viii) The defects pointed out in the latest audit-report especially in regard to the maintenance of ledger accounts for the teachers contributing to the Provident Fund should be removed.

Except for items (vi-viii) which are reasonably workable, the general impression created by the above is that of ignoring the obvious or saying something that is not seriously meant.

The question is whether and how far it is possible to extend the rooms of a rented house? The construction of additional lavatories in a rented house in a Municipal City involves the question of space, plan-approval and sanction by the Municipal authority and on top of all the landlord's consent to foot the bill.

The above remarks though made in respect of a few schools, do indeed represent the general trend of the trade. The Inspector's time and attention are mostly occupied by the administrative aspects of his job or just routine-work like checking the accounts, examining the records and looking into the time-table etc. The academic aspect of inspection mostly goes by default, or even if something is attempted that something is done half-heartedly and perfunctorily. In the recorded inspection notes one very often comes across vague and wishful expressions like : 'English is not being taught properly', 'more attention should be paid to the teaching of grammar', 'home-lessons in Mathematics have not been properly corrected', 'maps should be used in the History class as often as possible'. The Inspector tries to form his opinion about the quality of teaching by putting some random questions to the students. The students, somewhat puzzled and overawed by the Inspector's presence, either remain mum or give indifferent answers. Even if they respond quickly and intelligently, the short-time assessment that the Inspector makes is hardly any complete indication of the real state of affairs. The Inspector stays in the school for too short a while, during which it is neither possible to have a proper estimate of the teaching quality and standard, nor to establish contact with the teachers, nor to make any substantially constructive academical impression. A school is an organism and has its growth and decay in the same way as any organic body. To be able to properly assess its strength and weakness one must acquaint oneself with its origin and natural process of growth. One must have first-hand knowledge of its personnel. By personnel is meant the governors or the management, the teachers, the students and the parents. The progress and welfare of an educational institution do not just depend on the efficiency or earnestness of anyone of the above groups or sections of interest. The combination and co-ordination of all the different constituents are

essential. It is the Inspector's duty to help in bringing about co-operation and understanding amongst the different elements.

The Inspector should, therefore, keep, himself in active touch with them, and devote sufficient time to public contact. The Inspector is to play the role of a 'clearing house'. He is to bring fresh ideas and stimulating thoughts for the teachers and students of the school he visits. An active exchange of ideas and experience between the different educational institutions is not only possible, but essentially desirable through the Inspector's visit.

Need of a New Approach :

In keeping with the big changes that are taking place in the field of education all over the world, the role of the Inspector of Schools is also undergoing a remarkable transformation. Education today is being socialized. Education today is no longer the monopoly or special privilege of particular classes or groups. Everybody irrespective of social or economic stratification must have access to education. Education has been universally recognized as one of the fundamental rights of man in an egalitarian society. The notable change that is consequently taking place in regard to the work and attitude of the Inspector constitutes a shift of emphasis from authoritarian control to persuasive leadership, from prescription and enforcement to consultation and guidance.

The Inspector is no longer the mere watch-dog of administration. He has to play the more distinguished role of the teacher's friend, philosopher and guide, and the vital function of the Inspector as such involves three main tasks : (i) induction and admission of new entrants to the profession, (ii) improving the standard of teaching and (iii) maintenance of professional morale. This obviously postulates a relation of partnership between the Inspector and the teacher. The old concept of superior-subordinate relationship between the Inspector and

the teacher must be replaced by the new feeling of co-operation, understanding, and mutual help.

The initiative undoubtedly lies with the Inspector, who occupies a specially advantageous position. The natural tension between the teacher and his professional superior may be eased and diminished by the Inspector, if he has professional competence of a high order, and if he exercises his authority in a persuasive rather than authoritative manner. The Inspector can play his new role brilliantly by encouraging the development of the teacher, whose personality may be different, and whose potentiality may perhaps be richer than the Inspector's. The attitude of the Inspector must essentially be human, constructive and rational. The best Inspector is not one who arouses awe and apprehension in the minds of the teachers, but one who succeeds in inspiring them to understand the noble purpose and significance of their work, and gives them positive assistance in the discharge of their responsibilities. Against this general background of a constructive approach, the problems of inspection resolve into two main aspects : administrative and academic. The lacuna from which the present-day system often suffers lies in the fact that exclusive attention is paid to the administrative aspect to the neglect of the more important academic aspect. The excellence of an institution is not to be adjudged by its registers and records, audit-report and statistics. The meaning and significance of education as the means for the proper training of human character and personality has to be realized. If the School has to play this role properly and well, all attention has to be focussed on the method and content of education. The teacher has to be helped, and encouraged to improve his method, to enrich his knowledge, and to elevate himself intellectually and spiritually.

Constructive Inspection :

In-so-far as subject-teaching is concerned an Inspector

may not just be the master of all conceivable subjects—a factotum. He may not be in a position to contribute to the improvement of the teaching of all the school subjects.

The system in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere is to have a panel of subordinate Inspectors presided over by the Chief Inspector. An Inspector's plenary visit to the School spreads over two, three or even more days. The Inspector is accompanied by subject-specialists in music, physical education, games, agriculture etc. Not only are the lessons on different subjects carefully watched, but demonstrations are given, and full-length discussions on important points follow. The result is embodied in a detailed report. Inspection is a co-operative undertaking in which the Inspector and the teacher are partners. An important function of the Inspector consists in meeting the parents and the members of the public. Such meetings are either sponsored by and held in the School, or initiated by the Inspector himself who goes round and meets the people concerned outside the school. Such meetings improve school-community relations, and enable the Inspector to get a first-hand knowledge of the opinion of the public about the school, and to receive suggestions from various quarters. Such exchanges are always profitable. A school cannot just grow and prosper in the vacuum of isolation. It is through community contact and community service that the social objectives of education can be best fulfilled.

The Commission on Secondary Education appointed by the Government of India have devoted a couple of pages of their excellent report to the problems of supervision and inspection of Schools. The true role of an Inspector, in the opinion of the Commission, is to study the problems of each school, to take a comprehensive view of all its functions, and to help the teachers carry out his advice and recommendations. In keeping

with this view, the Commission prefers the term 'Educational Adviser' to 'Inspector'. The Commission also recommended employment of subject specialists for physical education, music, art, domestic science etc.

The Commission are of the view that a person to be chosen as an Inspector must possess high academic qualification, and should have practical teaching experience in schools for about 10 years, or should have been Headmaster of a High School for at least three years. The qualified staff of the Teacher Training Colleges should also be considered eligible for Inspectorship. The Commission recommend short-term service as Inspectors by Headmasters and Training College teachers, for this would enable them to appreciate the position of the Inspector and approach the problems of administration and teaching with intimate knowledge of the realities from their own experience.

It is hardly possible and far less desirable to lay down hard-and-fast formulae for the guidance of Inspectors. It is neither possible to put the functions of the Inspector within a strait jacket of precepts and principles. It is enough to say that inspection should be objective in approach and constructive in operation.

SOME SNAGS IN THE SECONDARY SYLLABUS

Sometime ago there was an uproar in our Parliament over the question of unemployment of the engineers. 'Too many engineers and too few doctors' was the outcry raised by some members by way of blaming that august body, the Planning Commission of India. That there have been some serious errors in the matter of planning, which means incorrect assessment of the current and future needs of the country with due regard to its economic capability, is an openly admitted fact. The Planning Commission under the patronage and indulgence, if one may use that expression, of the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru continued to grow in bulk, power and prestige, and soon outgrew itself completely out of proportions. The result was lop-sided planning with little heed to realities, but with the unrealistic ambition to catch up with the industrially advanced United States or the U.S.S.R. Priority of attention was devoted to industrial development, leading to the relative neglect of other vital fields of national development namely, agriculture, village industries and education etc. The years of the First and the Second Plans were marked by the somewhat spectacular growth of heavy industries specially steel and iron works, and similar other projects. These required engineering personnel. So there grew up in scores engineering institutions of varying dimensions with a view to supplying the requisite engineering personnel. Things went on smoothly for some time. Then came the inevitable slump. Before long the artificial yearly output outnumbered the places available. The early boom started quietly dying out. A newly-fangled engineer of whatever worth, could not just expect a four-digit

salary job as a matter of course. In brief, our Planning outlook and method now stands exposed to the criticism of being oblivious and neglectful about the other vital aspects of national development.

Humanities Neglected :

The mad craze for engineering also affected the Secondary Education Scheme. How ? The newly introduced multipurpose courses untitled the balance between the different streams. The rush for the science stream, not for science's own sake, but for the ulterior objective of an engineering career exceeded all proportions.

Next to science in popularity was "commerce", followed by technical studies : 'Humanities' was the worst sufferer. The social consequences of this imbalance cannot altogether be ignored and passed over. Neglect of the study of 'Humanities' is bound to impair the efficiency of the social and administrative services, literary and journalistic callings, legal and political professions etc. which by and large draw more from the 'Humanities' than from the other streams. And unfortunately, the new Secondary Education Scheme seems to have failed to evolve and develop on the desired lines with right and rational emphasis upon each stream calculated to serve the industrial, economic, social and cultural interests of the country.

Colonial Tradition :

Some of the chronic defects from which our school education suffers deserve to be critically examined. To repeat the oft-repeated charge, our schools still cling to the inheritance from the colonial days—a tradition of the English Grammar School education catering for the small minority of city-dwellers.

Our School programme is still oriented to a general preparation for clerical work in the government offices or for entrance

to higher education. The result is white-collar unemployment as the schools produce personnel, who are fitted only for minor clerical jobs. Skills of commercial value are not imparted in the Secondary schools, and therefore, trade and industry cannot provide for the large number of the adolescent school products. Unemployment looms large and anti-social activities flourish as a result.

The half-hearted introduction to Western culture at school leads the young Indian neither here nor there. The superficial training in Western science and technology is not useful enough for practical purposes. On the other hand, the very thin veneer of sophistication provided by the study of western literature, art and music etc. only generates contempt for the values of their own culture.

An Unrewarding Course :

It is unfortunate that the Western and urban concept of Secondary education has been accepted in this country without modifying it to suit certain special needs. What happens is : only a limited number of students proceed from rural Primary schools to Secondary education. Those who do, find the curriculum more uninteresting and unrewarding than it is to the city-bred children. The majority of the Secondary students from the rural areas give up after a couple of years or so, but by that time they acquire a taste for city life, and on leaving school they do not feel inclined to go back to the villages, but stay on in the towns seeking jobs. The value of English learnt during two or three years at school is poor and inconsequential.

Another lacuna is that an underdeveloped country like ours subsists mainly on agriculture. Physics and Chemistry are but the basic sciences of industrial development, and these are the main science subjects in our schools. An overdose of emphasis upon Physics and Chemistry is not fully justified in view of the fact that there are but few secondary industries to

absorb the school products. On the contrary, Botany and Biology ought to deserve greater attention for meeting the agricultural and health needs of the country. Trained personnel for the purpose of improving the agricultural methods, and people having primary medical knowledge are needed more urgently in the rural areas than engineers and technologists. In a country where there is only one doctor to 50,000 people, each man must be his own doctor. Introduction of the agricultural stream in the Secondary curriculum is at best the initial first step. It, however, lacks both in adequacy and perspective. The pattern of agricultural education imparted in the Higher Secondary as well as in the professional agricultural schools does seldom inspire the genuine peasant to alter crops and cultivation methods. The present incentive to agriculture is to be looked for somewhere else. The Indian peasant today is fully aware of the high prices of agricultural products. Profit-motive lies at the root of his enthusiasm. What is really needed by the country is practical farming education for the farmers, rather than prestige institutions like Agricultural Colleges and Universities offering degrees, which are at best passports to well-paid and comfortable jobs. Even the illiterate people feel tempted to secure secondary education facilities for their children, because, it is a symbol of social status and high living.

The pattern of the Secondary Education still encourages imitative propensities rather than originality. Our anxiety for the abolition of English and replacing it by Hindi is another instance of bad faith on a national plane. Statistics quoted by a section of the Press and not publicly challenged or contradicted, indicate that the most vocal exponents of Hindi in Parliament, have had their own children educated at the expensive English-medium schools. The newly-rich particularly the tradespeople, industrialists and others of that ilk evince unseemly keenness to spend their superfluous money on the education of their children through the English medium or in the English schools.

Even today there are people of position, who publicly boast of their lack of knowledge of their mother-tongue, and gloat over their proficiency (*sic*) in English. It is not quite uncommon to find Secondary school students struggling with Victorian novels without having any substantial acquaintance with their own mother-tongue. While even less than ten per cent of the secondary school products actually proceed to the higher academic studies, is it not just sheer waste to attach disproportionate importance to the study of a foreign language?

The developing countries are rightly or wrongly anxious to minimise their dependence on agriculture, and that is why they are rather overzealous to get their Secondary Education oriented to industrial and vocational training, without having any careful and realistic regard for the industrial needs of the country. Agriculture, on the other hand, remains bogged in the old traditions, and wedded to the antedated methods for lack of training and trained personnel.

The Communist system of work-experience gives the school students an introduction to the problems of the adult vocational world. The political motive behind such projects apart, the secondary schools in the developing countries may find out their educative and economic values.

One of the UNESCO objectives of Fundamental Education is to enable man to enjoy the best elements of his culture. The content of the Secondary School curriculum should of necessity be drawn from the best elements of the country's own culture. Blind borrowing from exotic sources is bound to disabuse the whole process of education.

EDUCATION—AN IMPETUS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Many are inclined to believe that Community Development in India is a commodity imported from America lock, stock and barrel. The ground perhaps for such a belief is that a number of slogans and shibboleths now in frequent use in connection with the Community Development sound American, and the volumes of literature now being produced at different Community Development conferences and seminars etc. have a distinct American smack. This apart, the Indian experts on Community Development also seem to have specialized in using American expressions and jargons in their talks and discourses, and confabulations. The above notion, therefore, is not wholly baseless, and, above all, the fact remains that the Community Development Programme in India is substantially supported by financial and technical assistance from America. It is but natural that the aim and organisational structure of the Programme would in some manner bear resemblance to its American counterpart. But in spite of all the apparent resemblance the two systems differ from each other in certain fundamentals.

Historical Background :

The historical background is a very important factor in the aims and evolution of any system. For example, at the time of American independence in 1776, since when community development in that new colony first started, that country was a vast tract of virgin land with a sparse population of barely two million. The original settlers of America were European migrants, who had left their fatherlands under unpleasant circum-

stances, carried unhappy memories, and naturally desired a complete break with the past. The original settlers in America were pioneers, who wanted to reject the *status quo*. Whereas India, when she regained her independence, had already a seething population of 360 million, with acute shortage of food, and scarcely any surplus land to grow more on. India has also a rich legacy of her past culture and heritage to look up to. Thus while India has adopted a concrete and comprehensive programme for reconstructing her economy on the lines of a *de novo* plan, she cannot altogether reject her past traditions or cut away from her old moorings. The present Indian endeavour to rebuild her economy is, therefore, a compromise between the past which is her own, and the present which she largely owes to others.

The main objectives, however, of the two systems are very much identical. The objectives of Community Development are outlined in its very definition. Community Development as defined by a Cambridge University seminar in 1948 is willing participation on the part of the people in an undertaking to ensure better living for the whole community. Initiative of the community, and methods of arousing such initiative are, therefore, implied in Community Development. Consistent with this basic definition the one important common feature between the two programmes consists in helping the people in the rural areas to live better. But in attaining this fundamental objective, the two countries, working under different conditions as they have to, adopted different ways as warranted by their special needs.

Difference is Procedural :

The difference is essentially procedural. The means of attaining the objectives constitutes the difference, and the difference is mainly in degrees. Broadly speaking, the American programme is based on appreciation of the need for education of the people, whereas its Indian counterpart, though not oblivious

of the importance of education, offers priority to material help to the people. The American programme presents an excellent example of cooperation between the Federal Government, the State Government and administration at the County level. The Indian programme has so far vested the entire responsibility of financing the Scheme in the Central and the State Governments. The local administrations have practically very little to contribute in cash to the implementation of the programme. The move to decentralise democracy and transfer power to the *Panchayets* may bring about a significant change in the entire administrative and financial set-up of the programme in India. In America the entire responsibility of developing the Community rests with the Agricultural Departments of the Federal and the State Governments, and the Agricultural Colleges. In India the Government Departments are required to work in co-ordination with one another through the co-ordinating agency of the newly created Development Department. The United States programme emphasises the development of agriculture as distinguished from agricultural production. What actually is meant by agricultural development requires some clarification. Agricultural development as conceived in the United States stands not only for increased field output, but agriculture as a pre-requisite to the broader development including marketing, co-operation, animal husbandry etc., and an overall raising of the standard of living. The assumption apparently is that agricultural development would give people more money, increase their resourcefulness and provide wherewithal to develop other things.

The Indian Approach :

The Indian approach to the problem differs fundamentally from that of the United States. The Indian approach in the main comprises allocation of resources for agriculture, industries, education and so on strictly prioritywise. In the peculiar context of the Indian conditions this is perhaps unavoidable.

In the United States the programme of Community Development is organised around

- (i) Production,
- (ii) Marketing,
- (iii) Youth activities,
- and (iv) Community Service.

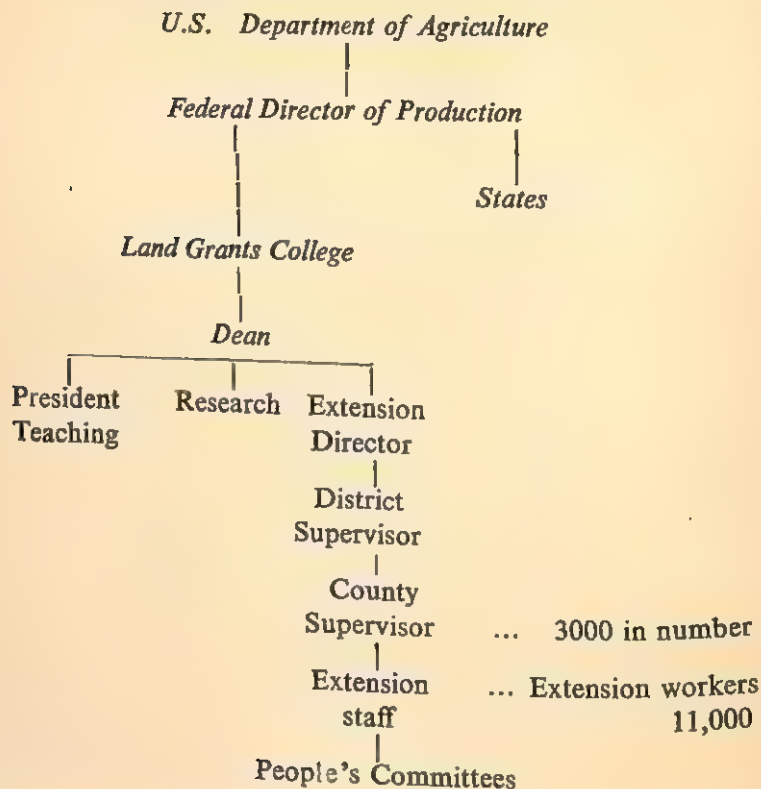
In the United States planning is done exclusively at the County level according to local needs. The local plans are put together and consolidated as the national plan. In India the programme provides for

- (i) Agricultural development,
- (ii) Cooperation,
- (iii) Industries
- (iv) Irrigation,
- (v) Education and Social Education etc.

The Indian programme is chiefly a Central programme formulated by the Central Government Ministries, and then passed on to the lower levels with provision for minor variations according to local conditions within the framework of the Central Plan.

In America the local personnel receive intensive job-training. The expert County Administrators supervise the work of the local Officers. The local officers are also helped and supported by the specialists from the staff of the Agricultural Colleges. These specialists are called Extension Specialists. This system has worked well in a relatively short time, and *mutatis mutandis* deserves careful consideration in so far as India is concerned.

The following is a tabular representation of the Community Development and Extension Service administrative set-up in America :—



The Beginning in America :

The origin of the Co-operative Agricultural Extension Service in the States is to be immediately traced from an Act of the American Federal Legislature in 1914. But even before that the leaders of public opinion in America thought seriously about the ways and means for conveying the benefits of agricultural and engineering research to the farmers on the field. The idea that it was essential to give the farmer proper education in agriculture began to gain ground from 1840 onwards, and the Congress passed an Act in 1865 recommending the establish-

ment of Land Grants Colleges by the Governments of the States. In the beginning, as was natural, the staff of the Land Colleges were people who were educated in the ordinary sense, but were not specialists in Engineering and Agriculture. While education had not attained the same standard and spread so far afield as to-day, the teachers of the Land Grants Colleges, who had got liberal education, rendered significant service in spreading education amongst the agricultural population. Later, however, the position gradually changed, and by 1914 regular specialist staffs were appointed in all these colleges. It was also realised that it was not enough to educate the farmers alone, it was equally important to carry the benefits of research to the very doors of the common people. A regular extension service has, therefore, been brought into being. The table above is an indication of the depth and penetration of the working of the Extension Service.

Hierarchy of Technical Guidance :

To elaborate this aspect of American development it must be said that in America the County is the unit for implementing the programme. The Governing body of the County takes policy-decisions on what exactly they propose to do in a given period of time. There are Extension agents and Assistant Extension agents attached to the Governing Body. These officers are subordinate to the Governing Body to the extent that they are appointed under the general orders of the Governing Body. They, however, get technical guidance from the District Supervisors, who are themselves promoted to this cadre from the category of agents, and who have had considerable field experience about the problems that confront the Extension agents. The District Supervisors in their turn get their guidance from the Extension Directors attached to the Land Grants Colleges established by the State Governments. The Extension Staff of the Land Grants Colleges in their turn look up for

guidance to the Federal Director of Extension in the Department of Agriculture of the Federal Government. The hierarchy reaching right from the level of the Extension agent to the Federal Director is continuous on the technical side. The Federal Director passes on the results of research conducted under his directions to the Land Grants Colleges, and the Land Grants colleges pass them downwards, and thus through successive stages they reach out to the farmers on the field.

Agriculture in the context of the American programme, as has already been pointed out, does not merely cover agricultural production. The term is comprehensively used to mean all aspects of rural life, and assumes that the provision of amenities and better living conditions follow automatically in the wake of increased agricultural production and the resultant higher income of the farmers.

The Indian Community Development programme came into being in 1952. Unlike the American programme, the Indian programme is a multipurpose plan with prioritywise emphasis on agriculture, water-supply, cooperatives, communication, schools etc. The stimulus in America is education, while the stimuli in India are amenities. While there is no denying the exigency of the Indian situation, the point whether the amenities programme can be activated, and made to yield better results by educating the people for whom it is intended deserves serious consideration. Without proper education of the people the programme of amenities is likely to degenerate into a one-way traffic of benefaction to the people, without themselves having to share any responsibility. Education is likely to create an urge, enlightenment and even discontent,—and that is essential for progress. Education should constitute the real base of the Community Development Programme.

THOUGHTS ON COMMUNITY WELFARE

A community means joint ownership or common possession in regard to something, specially property, interests and feelings. The very expression, community development is a comparatively recent addition to the vocabulary of the social worker, the term being first used at a Cambridge Seminar on African administration in 1948, to describe the process of enabling people to participate in the social and economic development of their own communities in contrast to the traditional methods where Government or non-Government agencies provide social services and civic amenities for the people. The developing countries such as our own lack in economic resources, trained personnel and administrative services to establish large-scale social security and social welfare programmes. So out of necessity, such countries have to evolve new methods to achieve social and economic progress. There is the growing realization that however sound national planning may be, progress can only be achieved by changes at the village level, i.e., at the base. People must develop the desire and willingness to adopt new techniques of agricultural production as well as the means to execute it.

Though not an exotic in the sense that social service is quite an old idea broached ages ago, and comes down the centuries in one form or another, the scientific concept and methodology is undoubtedly an import from the Western countries during recent times.

But the social problems of an industrialized, urbanized and economically more advanced society are fundamentally different from those of a rural society. The social workers in the

industrialized and urban society are by and large concerned with the problems of

- (i) Stress and strain of family life ;
- (ii) Mental illness ;
- (iii) Old age—its problems ;
- (iv) Unemployment ;
- (v) Needs of youth etc.

The problems in the predominantly rural areas are naturally somewhat different. The focus must be on providing the basic essentials of

- (i) Food ;
- (ii) Housing ;
- (iii) Education ;
- (iv) Health Services etc.

The method of assessment and evaluation heretofore adopted was of one kind, namely, the official authorities sitting on judgement over the work of the subordinate workers through

- (i) Appointment of an Evaluation or Assessment Committee ;
- (ii) Questionnaire ;
- (iii) On-the-spot visit, meetings and discussions with the people concerned ;

Some apparent advantages of this method are :

- (a) Review by experienced and knowledgeable persons ;
- (b) Presentation of a comprehensive and integrated picture for the whole country ;
- (c) Comparative study of the achievements and efforts made in the different parts under different circumstances.

But there are certain inherent shortcomings of such an approach viz.,

- (a) Ignoring the case of the bottom-level worker, who usually is either side-tracked or himself feels shy to speak out his mind ;
- (b) The process may be an objective assessment by outsider and detached observers, but not the self-analysis and evaluation by the worker himself ;
- (c) It is also not an expression of the direct reaction of the recipients and the beneficiaries, that is, the people themselves ;
- (d) Such an evaluation report may be a brilliant document, but not quite an intimate down-to-the-earth testament of facts.

Swami Vivekananda's famous speech entitled "My Plan of Campaign" delivered at Madras in 1897 on his return from his triumphal tour of the Western world gives us certain broad and pointed hints of evaluation of social service.

In the beginning the worker is to examine himself thoroughly whether he really means business. The very first test of service is whether one feels the urge for such work. The test is difficult. Do you feel like one suffocated when drowned? Do you really feel anguished at the sufferings of your fellow-men? Be true to yourself and if you pass this self-test, know for certain that you are fit to bear the burden of the Cross of service. This is what Swamiji says.

Second is mental preparation for certain situations, namely, non-recognition by the people who count. There may be even derision and contempt. Even in advanced countries like the U.K. and the U.S.A., the social workers are usually sarcastically nicknamed "Do-gooders". Next follows the apathy of the beneficiaries themselves. In adult education, for example, the adult himself is most indifferent and apathetic.

Then follows the supreme need of a definite plan and programme, not only the one overall blueprint that comes from above, but the worker's own plan, which means his full and intimate knowledge of the community situation and resources.

By way of spelling out the above in terms of our own practical work and experiences in the field, we may say—

- (i) principally, there are two most important partners in the undertaking, the worker himself on the one hand, and his colleagues, co-workers as also the public or the community at large on the other ;
- (ii) The basic approach to social work is respect for the individual, respect for self, respect for co-workers and colleagues, and respect for the rest.

A Social Education Organizer is a generalist as well as a specialist.

His duties as a generalist consist in interpreting the programme of Community Development and make others interested in it. The method is essentially one of persuasion and carrying conviction. As a specialist he has to put into effect certain technical skill and knowledge. But such technical or specialized skill without the fundamental background of awareness of the fact that every one is dedicated from the beginning to end to the task of serving the country proves futile. A mere technician with out that magic touch of service before self degenerates into a mechanized automaton. He may go some way but not all the way.

The spirit of service is essential both for voluntary work and work paid for. The slender line of difference between a voluntary worker, whom circumstances enable to spare time and labour, and a paid worker who may work for his bread and sustenance, disappears when both are inspired by the spirit of devotion and service. Salaried service should be no taboo. All that is required of such a worker is that he should identify himself completely with the community's welfare.

ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WELFARE STATE

It is quite commonplace now-a-days to call India a Welfare State. Before discussing what the duties of youth, particularly the girls should be, in building up a new India, let us first of all try to be clear as to what a welfare state really means. Every state or Government whatever its political complexion may be, professes to promote the welfare of its subjects. In a generalistic sense every form of state or Government—dictatorial or democratic—is more or less a Welfare State. But then, the term 'Welfare State' has, of late, acquired a technical and definitive connotation. A modern 'Welfare State' in the real sense of the expression is one that assumes the full responsibility of ensuring social justice and economic equality and security of its citizens in all possible aspects. The social security programme such as the one in the Welfare State of the United Kingdom or Denmark or Sweden, takes care of the citizen's material well-being at all the important stages of life. The coverage is comprehensive. Within the wide ambit of the programme come pre-natal/post-natal care of the mother, the child's upbringing and education, apprenticeship, un-employment relief, old age pension, care for the old and infirm and funeral benefits etc. The programme is not amateurish, but scientifically drawn up, and supported by the authorities that be. Liberal provisions are made in the country's budget—sometimes to the extent of 40% of the total revenue receipt for financing the programme.

Implications of the Welfare Programme :

To be more concrete and objective, the implications of a Welfare State may be summed up as follows :—

(i) Every child and adult should have the fullest opportunity to grow up and develop his talents and natural abilities. This means that the State is responsible for the upbringing and training of its citizens.

(ii) The Welfare State should provide useful work for every citizen on adequate wages. This is to guarantee the citizen's economic self-sufficiency and security.

(iii) Adequate measures should be provided for medical care of the sick, relief, rehabilitation and maintenance of disabled persons, and also for old age.

(iv) Legal, political, social and economic equality must be guaranteed by the State.

It is perfectly clear that in a Welfare State a citizen is assured of education, employment, medical care, old-age pension etc. at the cost of the State. This has led to the commonplace notion that in a Welfare State, the State is the benefactor and the people are the beneficiaries ; the State is the giver and the people are the receivers. The State is there to do everything for the people, and that the people have nothing to do in their turn. This is entirely a misconception, a distorted fabrication of the idea and ideals of a Welfare State. A State has been likened to the mammoth car of *Juggernaut*. The car does not budge an inch at the pull of an individual, however strong and powerful he may be. The huge chariot moves only when the whole crowd takes up the chord and pulls collectively. The programme of a welfare state cannot be fully implemented without the help and co-operation of the people. It is a cooperative venture, of which the State or the Government is, of course, the major and the most important partner. The people nevertheless have to play their part both individually and collectively.

Democracy not only a Political Conception :

Democracy is not only a political conception. It is a way

of life. Political equality coupled with equal social, educational and cultural rights makes democracy realistic and meaningful. Individuals and voluntary organizations have to play a very big role in promoting the social, educational and cultural aspects of democracy. The Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the Red Cross Society, The Boy Scouts & Girl Guides, The Workers' Educational Associations, and similar other national and international organizations in their own way contribute to the attainment and fulfilment of the aims and ideals of democracy. The most significant purposes that these organizations are striving to serve is to transcend the national and geographical limits, and to universalize equality of human rights, and thus contribute to the establishment of international democracy. Most of these organizations work outside the Government and without governmental aid. They maintain paid staff, but many of their workers are volunteers.

A special mention may be made of three other organizations in particular, namely, the Peace Corps which is an American organization, the Commonwealth Service Group and the Swans of Sweden. These organizations conduct their activities at home and abroad, and most of their workers are volunteers or near-volunteers. We know of Peace Corps workers working in India, in Africa country and other developing countries for social and economic uplift of the people. These workers, qualified and competent as they are, might have earned handsomely even according to their own standard, had they pursued regular professional careers. Their motive is altruistic. Their spirit of service before self merits admiration.

Some Problems Here and Abroad :

The social, family and individual problems in the highly industrialized and urbanized European communities differ fundamentally from those of a predominantly rural Indian

society. The main social and family-life problems in the Western countries may be listed as

- (i) Unstable and broken families, loose marital ties.
- (ii) Neurosis and mental maladies.
- (iii) Old age and lonesomeness.
- (vi) Problems of wild and impetuous youth etc.

Not that these problems do not exist in our society. They do, but not yet to that extent. With the gradual social and economic transformation under the impact of industrialization and urbanization, these are likely to grow and multiply. On the contrary, the problems that beset us to-day are in the main

- (i) Food shortage and malnutrition.
- (ii) Educational backwardness.
- (iii) Inadequacy of medical help and treatment.
- (iv) Housing shortage.
- (v) Unprecedented population growth.

Apart from the well-planned and systematically patterned activities of the organizations referred to, there are quite a number of other ways in which youngmen and women may and do devote themselves to social and community service. The following is an illustrative list :

- (i) To help immigrants and refugees in finding out shelters.
- (ii) To help such people in establishing contact with their friends and kith and kin if any.
- (iii) To keep lone old men and women company, and do their errands.
- (iv) To repair the houses and furniture etc. of the disabled persons, to lay out their gardens, to do their marketing, and to read and sing to them.

- (v) To read to the patients in hospitals and write letters for them.

The objectives at the back of such self-imposed social duties are principally two :

To relieve the technical personnel from the burden of non-technical duties and enable them to devote more time to their own specialized assignments and civic and social training of youths for character-formation.

Situation in Our Country :

Now let us see how our own manpower resources may be effectively utilized in the great task of national reconstruction. Our major problems, namely, food shortage, population explosion, mass-illiteracy, shortage of housing etc. are of course being tackled at the national level by the Government.

The principal agency set up for the purpose of implementing the overall national reconstruction programme is the Community Development Project. The Central Social Welfare Advisory Board is an important organization dealing with the children's and women's welfare programme in particular. The Bharat Sevak Samaj is yet another non-official body professing a similar programme of activities. Voluntary organizations, like the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the Ramakrishna Mission, the All-India Women's Conference etc. are actively working in the field. Almost all such organizations to-day receive financial assistance from the Government. This is more or less unavoidable in the present -day circumstances.

Wholesale dependence upon individual and public charity is no longer a practicable proposition. Be that as it may, these organizations support and supplement the national programme. These are valuable allies to the Governmental agencies, and provide a training ground for the would-be workers.

Scope for Youth :

In what way the rising generation of the country can participate in the great mission and undertaking for national reconstruction is the most vital question. There are two practical ways :

(i) By association with the Government through Government service. Government service to-day is not to be looked upon as mere paid jobs, but as an opportunity of serving the country being part and parcel of its government. Even service in private business and industry if looked at from the correct angle is also service to the country. The thing that matters most is outlook and attitude. The old notion of a power-puffed bureaucrat has to be given up. The outlook of a public servant has to be cultivated instead.

(ii) Secondly, by active association with the activities of the Voluntary Welfare Organizations, or by forming into voluntary bodies with clear-cut aims and a programme of work.

Despite the extensive coverage provided by the Five-Year Plans, there still remains quite a lot of uncovered areas, where voluntary service is needed to make good the leeway. There are numerous ancillaries to the main programmes which voluntary organizations and even individuals may fruitfully undertake. Limited resources and lack of funds need not always prove any serious handicap. On the other hand offer of voluntary service in these fields will go a great way towards filling up the gaps left by the Government-sponsored programmes and meeting other shortcomings. Voluntary workers are in a better position than paid personnel to inspire public enthusiasm, and provide constructive leadership.

The scope for voluntary service is manifold and varied. Almost every nation-building department—education, health, co-operative, industries, etc.—offers such opportunities in plenty. But an individual worker, whatever his or her resources

may be, should not pitch his/her mark too high. Only a modest programme with necessary safeguards against possible obstacles and pitfalls may be adopted at first. Success in small things ushers in bigger successes. Failure in big things may spell bigger disasters.

Mass-illiteracy poses a problem of first-rate magnitude. Much of our efforts to reconstruct the social and economic fabric of life has floundered on the bed-rock of ignorance and illiteracy. Our democratic image has been largely tarnished by the masses of people lacking in fundamental education. It is one of the most potential and promising areas where voluntary service may play a tremendous role. Indian population is almost half male and half female. But equality in number is no index to equality in educational progress. The women in India are deplorably backward in education. Only 12.6% are today considered literate. The problem of educational backwardness of the country will have been nearly solved if the women were educated first. The reason is simple. An educated mother seldom allows her children to go uneducated. The father is not as much effective in this respect. Voluntary service in this vast field is an urgent national call to which every educated man and woman should readily respond. It is one of our first and foremost duties. Not much money nor the paraphernalia of costly equipment are all that is needed. What is needed really is earnestness, patience and spirit of service. On the educated youths of the country, rests this sacred task of eradicating illiteracy through individual efforts and group action. The educated women may also render equally valuable service in promoting cultural activities through library service.

One should be fully aware from the beginning that service in the field of education is neither remunerative nor exciting. But then it is the most important field of action for national uplift and regeneration. There may be no adequate

material return or reward for love's labour, but there is the supreme satisfaction that the foundation of a great society and a noble nation is being laid through self-denying efforts. Progress, prosperity and peace are rooted in an efficient and efficacious system of education.

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Education in its original form was more community-based than now. Education of the primitive man for whatever it was worth, was preparation to enable him to live in the community, with the community and for the community. But since education became institutionalised, it gradually drifted away from the community. As a result the educational institutions of to-day have in a large measure lost contact with the people, for whom these institutions are really intended. This has had an adverse social effect. The educated consider themselves as superior to those without education. A kind of nauseating snobbishness grows creating division between the members of the community. Friendship, after all, is essentially unity of outlook and feelings. Poet Tagore once regretted that an English-educated Indian may feel more neighbourly with an Englishman across the seven seas than with his own next-door fellow Indian, who is illiterate and ignorant of English.

The community school concept is an important development in the field of education to-day. The basic meaning of community is that the people of a locality or area share common interest in matters relating to their welfare or otherwise. This feeling of oneness is the root of community development. The Community School aims at two objectives in particular:—

(i) The activities of the school should not remain confined only within its own campus, but extend around. The school must offer its services to the community that sustains it.

(ii) That the members of the community should not fight shy of the school and keep away from it, but consider it as their own institution, and share the responsibility for its upkeep and

improvement. Opportunities should be provided by the school for local participation in its educational, vocational and cultural activities as the case may be.

When we come across any new idea we are generally inclined to look to the bigger and more advanced countries for enlightenment and perhaps inspiration. All attempts to reform the educational system in India so far are more or less attempts at adopting or adapting the trends prevalent in countries like England, the United States and of late the U.S.S.R. We are more closely in touch with these countries through diplomatic and political exchanges, commercial transactions and cultural missions than with others. We often borrow from them more copiously than we should.

It is rather a pity that smaller countries which are nearer to us, are given less attention than they deserve. We are often ignorant about our more immediate neighbours. In many cases this is not profitable.

To one casually going through a report on the development of the Community School System in the Philippines, the progress of the scheme in that country seems really amazing. The report reads : Only 19 years back the percentage of literacy in that country was 52. The administrators and other public-minded men were apparently dissatisfied, and they wanted to push up literacy by all means at their disposal.

The target they set before them was that every man and woman should be made literate and educated. Everyone would lead a happy and prosperous life without want and without ignorance. This was no doubt a difficult task to accomplish. But under dynamic leadership and with determined efforts, the country has largely succeeded in reaching the target. By 1966 the percentage of literacy went up to 80, and that in spite of the tremendous population explosion which is the order of the day everywhere. The secret of success of this national project lies more or

less in the planning and organisation of the Community School.

There is a constitutional mandate that every school recognized and subsidized by the State must provide educational facilities for the adult members of the Community. Primary education is compulsory. This, coupled with the energetic and widespread Community-School system has succeeded in achieving this remarkable success. The people expect that with more vigorous efforts it might be possible to wipe out illiteracy completely within another five years' time.

Illiteracy begets poverty, and poverty begets illiteracy, and, therefore, both deserve early annihilation. This is the slogan, the motto of the movement. Every school—Primary, Elementary and Secondary, is required under the law to maintain a Community class outside the normal school hours. The whole-time school teacher, who is usually tired, is not generally placed in-charge of the Community Class. Paid workers as well as volunteers are recruited from outside for this purpose. Arrangements for their training in this special task are arranged by the Bureau of Adult Education under the Ministry of education. The programme outlined and adopted by a Community School embraces a variety of subjects that go to meet the requirements of the people. Emphasis is laid upon literacy. Health and sanitation, family-planning, small industries and crafts, trade apprenticeship and cultural and recreational activities are also included.

The crux of the whole thing consists in a dynamic and purposeful leadership at the back of the project. It is indeed a matter of national pride and fortune that the people at the helm meant business right from the beginning. Constructive Planning and organizational initiative emanated both from the Government and the voluntary workers. The happiest feature was the perfect understanding and co-operation between the Government and the non-Government agencies.

READING MATERIALS FOR JUVENILE READERS

"No growing life can truly prosper without those two great influences—humour and imagination," said Lytton Strachey.

The theory that the child's education proceeds infinitely better through joy and interest than through compulsion is now universally admitted. This objective, therefore, should always be kept in view by every writer of juvenile literature. This branch of Bengali literature has made considerable progress within a comparatively short time. Not many years ago, the whole stock of what might have been classified as Bengali juvenile literature was extremely meagre and consisted of a few primers, half-a-dozen verses or hymns and some folk-tales and story-books of rather hackneyed type. A beginner after his first acquaintance with the alphabet had no escape from the drudgery of plodding through the maze of diphthongs and spellings—an inevitable and irksome phase in the child's training,—a phase so aptly characterized by Rabindranath as a "stormy spell". The stuff that used to be forced down the beginner's throat had none of the sugar that sweetens the pill. The technique of child-training was more gymnastic than artistic, and there was little scope for pleasure or play of imagination either in the course taught or the method followed.

Jogindra Nath Sarkar was the first Bengali writer to strike a departure from this humdrum method. His well-known primer for the beginners, "*Hashi Khushi*" (laugh and joy) is the first serious attempt at teaching the alphabet and elementary spelling and composition through simple catchy verses and interesting stories. His primers and elementary readers stand out almost as "classics" in our literature and remain unrivalled in point of originality, elegance and simplicity.

The secret of his superiority over other writers consists in his being able to arouse interest and curiosity in the child's mind through simple lilting verses, the theme and subject-matter of which are objects quite familiar to the child. He also realized the importance of creating visual interest by inserting appropriate illustrations alongside the verses. His books are profusely illustrated. It is mostly on this very fundamental point, that is, in choosing objects of common interest for the subject-matter of the lesson that less talented writers commit a serious blunder. In trying to retain the rhythmic effect of the verses, they often choose foreign and fantastic subjects which necessarily lack in interest and reality. So while we have quite a plentiful supply of pictorial primers composed in verses, we have very few indeed of real educative value and interest.

Bengali literature is also remarkably rich in juvenile stories. Quite a bewildering number of publications come out every year, and so far as the quantity of the output is concerned, we have indeed little more to expect at present. But from the point of view of quality, surely, there is yet ample room for improvement.

An inspector of schools going his usual round of inspection very often finds the school-libraries totally failing to serve the purpose for which they are intended. Not that there is any lack of books. there are rather a good number to adorn the shelves. Why then are the boys and girls generally unwilling to take out books from the library and read them even if they do take out some? The reason is, in the first place, lack of effort on the part of the teachers to popularize the library and secondly, lack of really good stuff to read. Many writers of juvenile literature today write more with an eye to the royalty and profit than with sufficient care and forethought to make the subject really suitable for the youthful readers.

Most of these publications are but hasty adaptations from foreign sources and hence unrealistic to a degree. One simple instance will bear out the point. Only the other day the writer

came across a nicely-bound and attractively illustrated juvenile best-seller by a well-known author, a cursory perusal of which revealed that it was but a clandestine rendering of H. G. Wells's "*The Invisible Man*". The author has spared no pains to make the content awe-inspiring and thrilling by introducing all manner of strange and weird elements. Nevertheless, the drawback of the book is palpable. The central theme of the original English book has been woven round a fabric of Indian tale. But the author has not been quite successful in his attempt. In trying to be clever he has rather rendered himself grotesque. A much better result might have been achieved had the author produced a free and facile translation of H. G. Wells. One Bengali author, Kuladaranjan Roy, for example, has achieved striking success in translating the works of Jules Verne.

After going through many of our so-called juvenile publications and also often questioning the school-boys, the writer feels convinced that one great fault with most of the present-day authors is that they ignore the importance and significance of home subjects which when well-presented in stories and narratives more easily engage the reader's attention than foreign tales. The writings of Upendra Kishore Roychoudhury, founder-editor of *Sandesh* (a monthly journal for children), provide an excellent example to the point. Very seldom he drew from foreign sources, and even if he ever did, he did his job with such consummate skill that the common faults of adaptation never undermined the merit of his writings. He was always as good as original. He could lend charm to any trifle of a story by virtue of his inimitable style and expression. By the magic of his pen, even the meanest of the lizard that scales our walls, becomes the lively subject-matter of a treatise on Natural History that interests the young and the old alike. The standard set up by this gifted writer and successfully maintained by his equally gifted son Sukumar Roy may very well serve as a model for the writers of juvenile literature.

TEACHER-AGITATION : A PROGNOSIS

Niggardly pay and poor standard of living have been the curse and bane of the teaching profession for unaccountably long time. Lukewarm lip-sympathy and facile felicitations add insult to injury, rather than alter the teacher's unenviable lot. Beggarly emolument has been as much harmful to the cause of national education, as aggravating frustration in what is expected to be an exciting and rewarding vocation of life. A typical old newspaper advertisement, though conceived in jest, may be interpreted in earnest as the community's real attitude to and expectations from a teacher.

The advertisement reads as follows :—

Wanted

A young teacher
With the memory of a parrot,
The sagacity of an owl,
The strength of an eagle,
The speed of a hawk,
The gentleness of a dove,
The friendliness of a sparrow ;
Up with the lark
At work with the robin.
And when caged, content with
the feed of a canary.

(Bulletin of a Board of Toronto Seminary)

The community expects the utmost from the teacher but pays him most grudgingly a mere pittance. 'Reap as you sow' is the maxim that is good enough to remind the community about the irrefutable relation between the teacher's socio-economic status and professional efficiency. In today's world of conflicts the teachers as the last of the large unorganized groups have been fast emerging as a force with amazing striking potential. It is not only in financially handicapped countries like India and Pakistan but also in fabulous opulence, for example, in the United States, that teachers have resorted to organise mass-strikes to register their protest against the society's inequitable deal, and to extract what they consider their just and legitimate dues. Everywhere teachers today stand organized bulwarklike against social injustice and governmental apathy. The teachers as a body very much consider themselves professional, and demand equitable pay and status as in comparison with other trades that be. The teacher movement all over the world today draws its power and sustenance essentially from three sources.

The spirit and method of trade-unionism guide the course of teacher-agitation in the United States and Britain. The American Federation of Teachers, for instance, got a big financial support from the powerful Federation of Labour to which body the former is an affiliate. In West Bengal today the biggest teachers' association owes direct allegiance to one of the massive political parties. The teacher-power today is politically motivated.

The longer and better professional training of the younger generation of teachers is yet another cause of wide-spread dissatisfaction amongst the cadre. Teachers suffer by comparison. The low level of the teacher's salary in comparison with that of other professionals is a constant source of irritation

specially having regard to the day-to-day mounting cost of living.

The third basic cause of teacher unrest lies deep in the changing face of population-composition in the cities and towns, where the storm of political agitation brews. The teacher-movement today is politico-economic in inspiration, and town-based in organization. A fundamental reason behind the teacher-strikes may be traced to and identified with the problems of the populous urban centres.

The majority population in the cities and towns today consists of the underprivileged section of the people. From the numerical point of view, however, this does not spell out any drastic change in the population pattern. The underprivileged have always been in the majority. The basic difference then is that while the rank and file in the placid nineteenth century atmosphere took things for granted, the present generation of the masses of people are politically conscious and militant in outlook. The so-called disadvantaged people have swallowed up the privileged middle and upper classes, who are no longer in a position to hold their own in the face of these enormous odds. The disadvantaged majority at the bottom of the economic ladder suffer from chaotic family conditions, and are naturally reticent and rueful. Urbanization, technology and automation coupled with the grind of poverty and squalor make the youth of today desperate. Large overcrowded schools with recalcitrant students pose a serious situation for the younger generation of teachers and foil them despite their best efforts.

Teachers today are mostly recruited from the frustrated section, and inherit, as a matter of course, the legacy of discontent and desperation. The teacher-agitation by and large is a fight for bread. The teacher organizations direct their efforts toward wresting more and more economic conces-

sions. The movement is predominantly money-motivated, and only apologetically academic.

The agitation has largely succeeded in achieving its immediate objectives. The teacher's emolument today is not as appallingly low as it used to be two decades ago. In some countries the teachers have already been placed on footings of comparable parity with other vocations. The Burnham scale in England and the New York scale are examples to the point. But the question as to why the neo-teachers so pitifully lag behind in initiating social and economic progress of the community remains to be answered. If money is the panacea of all ills, why has it not worked even in countries like England and the United States ?

One of the largest units of the public school system in the world is in New York City. Money spent on running it is amazingly lavish. Nearly 1.5 billion dollars are annually spent in running the schools that enrol over one million pupils, who are taught by more than 54,000 teachers. The per capita rate works out at 1,000 dollars per student. Even by the United States' standard, the teacher's salary in New York is exceedingly generous. He is well-off enough to afford himself the luxury of a personal car, occasional first-class pleasure trips and a four bed-room flat. Notwithstanding, the teachers are spoiling for a fight. They are in line with the Black-Power revolt and student unrest. The American diagnosis of the malady is that the teachers today have drifted into the middle-class life of material comforts without being able to tackle this century's problems of equality and freedom. The famous historian Will Durant analyses certain fundamental human issues in clear and succinct terms :

"Nature smiles at the union of freedom and equality in our Utopias. For freedom and equality are sworn and everlasting enemies, and when one prevails, the other dies. Leave

men free, and their natural inequalities will multiply almost geometrically, as in Britain and America in the nineteenth century under *laissez-faire*. To check the growth of inequality, liberty must be sacrificed, as in Russia after 1917. Even when repressed inequality grows. Only the man who is below the average in economic ability desires equality. Those who are conscious of their superior ability desire freedom and in the end superior ability has its way.

The teacher is on the war-path. With his effective weapons, namely, increasing power of negotiation, cease-work and strike, etc., he is now able to get his demands fulfilled. The newly-acquired power enables him to improve his socio-economic position. As the economic underdogs of the community, the teachers hitherto did very naturally strive to attain equality. The teacher-struggle has in some countries resulted in phenomenal success. But the question bears repetition : Why hasn't money done the miracle ?

Turning to New York again, we find the New York City students rank below national norms in the basic skills of learning. The hypothesis that the art or science of teaching will qualitatively improve with improvement of the teacher's financial condition has not proved correct. The educational scene in India today substantially corroborates the above thesis.

That power tends to corrupt is a truism. The view prevails in some quarters that the growing teacher-power may prove disastrous to the vocation in the long run. As power increases educational ideals, beliefs and practices correspondingly deteriorate. In the scramble for power, some educators may of necessity compromise with the high principles, and part with their beliefs and tradition. Suffering, sacrifice and hardship etc. that used to be the usual lot of teachers in the bad old days are

to be rejected straightaway as irrelevant. Even the wisdom of a Tagore embodied in his saying 'Try to live a simple life without being poor' is seldom appreciated. Money and power seem to be the principal motive-force behind the movement. It is apprehended, and not without reason, that a well-paid, well-fed, well-groomed teacher enjoying most of the amenities of comfortable middle-class life, may disdain hard and rough manual activities to provide opportunities for instruction by example. The teacher of the Basic School is supposed to participate with his pupils, or rather give the lead in the programme for *safai*, gardening and other out-of-door work. But a teacher enjoying superior socio-economic status may consider such activities menial and undignified, and delegate them to his assistant and helper.

Another aspect of the present-day teacher-agitation tends to weaken voluntary community service. As the teacher gains in his bargaining power and raises his demands higher and higher, the community, which is the ultimate pay-master, will naturally react sharply against all unreasonable claims.

The school managers who have to answer the public often find themselves caught between the cross-fires of student unrest and teacher-agitation. They have to face problems that call for more time and energy. Purely part-time voluntary service proves entirely inadequate to cope with the problems. The community should, in the circumstances, be prepared to pay the whole-time managers or have them replaced by direct Government management. In either case the scope of voluntary participation will be considerably squeezed, if not ultimately eliminated. The spirit of voluntary service and community-mindedness are bound to die out under pressure of state regimentation as happened in Nazi Germany and communist Russia. Whether such a state of affairs is all for the good or ill is an open question. The character of public education is bound to change as the

community-minded and educationally sensitive members will withdraw from voluntary service and their places will be taken by men motivated by monetary or political gain.

But all is not as bad as that. The movement for power may at times tend to degenerate into commonplace rowdiness with the immediate objective of wresting material concessions from unwilling hands. Occasional excesses are oftentimes the inevitable outcome of mass-movements. Diminishing qualitative returns corresponding to the teacher's material gains may be just a passing interim phase.

Let us take a longer, broader and a more realistic view of things. Improvement of the teacher's economic position should not always be construed as a hindrance to his professional integrity. Instead of being alienated from manual work and for that matter, from the children coming from the under-privileged social strata as apprehended by some, the teacher in his more honourable and secure position may strive to help his fellow-beings to get out of the morass of misery and poverty. There is every likelihood of the teaching profession being elevated to new heights and dimensions through the devoted services of teachers emancipated from the drudge of pecuniary difficulties, and the complex of social inferiority.

The new-born teacher-power may in the face of sweeping changes and upheavals in society, prove to be a balancing factor engendering learning and freedom. The growing teacher-power may soon shed itself of violence and disruption, and re-emerge as a powerful social leadership. The teachers who have been all the while dreaming to have the last say in matters relating to methodology, curriculum, examination and school organization, etc., may now have the strength to bear the burden of the responsibility of power, and see their dream fulfilled. Having fought for and gained the power of policy-making the teacher should contemplate the responsibilities that accompany power.

As a leader of the society the onus of maintaining the three-fold balance falls upon him. This is the foretaste of leadership. On the one hand the teacher should be fully aware of the needs of the students, and the aims of education. The needs and limitations of the institution, he is called upon to serve, should also be one of his primary concerns. Secondly, the resources of the community that sustains him and his profession should be seriously taken into account. And thirdly, he should continue to improve his own equipage and professional worthiness vis-a-vis his desire to raise his standard of living in the present inflationary economy. A proper appraisal of the aims and objectives of the educational enterprise, the economic realities that the profession has to confront, and the financial capability of the community helps to maintain this all-important balance.

TRAINING NOT FOR NOTHING

The teacher does today, as he did in the past, occupy a place of unique importance in the social order. A position of natural leadership is the teacher's rightful heredity so to say. Now, what does this leadership really signify? How is the teacher expected to fulfil his obligations in the role of a social leader? What is it that fundamentally differentiates a teacher from a popular demagogue, whose main function consists in rousing the rabble to the hectic height of excitation. Political leadership, as we usually envisage, rouses the people's passion for some action usually against the old order of things and also sometime for bringing about a new. Political leadership is born out of expediencies, and withers with the change of time and circumstances. Its impact on human society, though at times convulsive and sweeping, is short-lived and temporary. The teacher as the social leader, on the contrary, is a force in perpetuity. He casts and moulds human character, and is, therefore, an architect of the social facade which may change but does not wither. Sublimity of character sends forth its fragrance through time, and creates an atmosphere that abides.

The ancient society used to be led and guided by the priest-teachers. The Brahmins, for example, formed the intellectual echelon and offered constructive leadership in matters relating to social and cultural development, and pragmatically piloted the more mundane affairs, namely, governance of the state. Thus the teacher in the ancient society was the natural leader of the community, and enjoyed the highest prestige and preeminence.

The modern teacher is as much vital a component of the society as his forbear was, and yet the position of the former does not compare favourably with that of the latter. The vocation of teaching today shows an unmistakable trend toward professionalism. The difference between dilettantism and professionalism may be spelt out in terms of material gain assured by professional training. A teacher who is professionally trained seeks protection under certain trade-union rights. The employer-employee relation which is well-defined in industries, business and commerce has also come into being in the teaching profession. This is the inevitable outcome of inflationary economy affecting all marginal bread-winners. The teachers are yet to vie with the upper-rung income-groups in the lucrative and profit-earning vocations of our time. Importance of pedagogical training as a matter of professional preparation is being increasingly recognized. Even two decades ago a dilettante was not altogether debarred from the profession. An untrained hand could come into the profession and continue as such without objection or obstruction. Dearth of hands prompted King Frederick the Great of Germany to employ ex-servicemen as teachers with a view to promoting education amongst his people. Even a man of national eminence like G.K. Gokhale did not consider training to be the be-all and end-all by itself. His own education, he asserted, did not suffer because he and the people of his time had to sit at the feet of untrained amateurs. But things have since radically changed. No one without training would be accepted today as a full-fledged member of the profession. The days of dilettantism are gone.

Having accepted professionalism as the main plank of the teacher's platform there is no escape from acquiescence in the consequent responsibilities implied. The teacher who clamours for trade-union rights must be prepared to share the full responsibilities of the profession. The teacher who claims equality of status with the members of other professions must likewise

prepare himself suitably for the purpose. The justness of his demand is beyond cavil, but it shall not stand a moment's scrutiny if he lacks in quality and competence. Training, therefore, is an inevitable prerequisite to induction into the profession of teaching.

A good deal of misgiving seems to prevail in regard to the true purpose of teacher-training. What with the rapid expansion of education, and what with the increasing number of schools the demand for a much larger personnel to be drafted to the teaching service is phenomenally mounting. The teacher-training colleges have been hard put to it to provide accommodation to the growing number of applicant-trainees. In the State of West Bengal, for example, the recent years have witnessed the establishment of a good number of Teacher Training Colleges. Though some of these are improvised; and apparently fall short of the necessary equipmental and material requisites, there is no gainsaying the fact that they serve a very useful purpose nevertheless. West Bengal, in particular, is one amongst the states of India that trail behind others in teacher-education. The percentage of trained teachers in Secondary Schools in West Bengal approximates 35 in sad contrast to Punjab with 96%, Kerala, Andhra and other states with well above 80%. This is not mere statistical polemic but a home truth that educational planners and administrators of the state should take particular care of.

Consequent upon the Government circular that an untrained teacher shall not be entitled to earn the benefit of increment in the approved scale of pay, the rush for admission to the Training Colleges has considerably increased, and will so continue for yet sometime. The teacher is confronted with the problem "to have or not to have". Willy-nilly the man or woman, who has been obliged to take resort to the teaching profession, and finds no better way out, is obliged to go in for the

pedagogic course, which alone guarantees increment, confirmation, promotion, etc.

Thus the motivation for training is more monetary than academic. To the teacher-trainee the matter of utmost importance seems to be to secure a degree as an instrument of pecuniary gain and advancement of professional status. The educational aims and purpose of training are being subordinated to the more immediate and practical concern. The average teacher-trainee makes no secret of the matter. He evinces scant keenness for gaining knowledge in the subjects he is called upon to study.

Ingenuous are the ways whereby a pass may now-a-days be secured in the Final Examination. With the gradual increase in the number of students, the enterprising (*sic*) authors and publishers have started producing made-easies, digests and cram-books of questionable quality. Reversing the well-known economic law, bad money has practically ousted good money from the market. Counterfeit materials have largely pushed out the original and authoritative works on education and methodology. The B.Ed. Examination is no more selective and specialized, but just another omnibus public examination of the University with all its attendant evils. The prevailing short-range view of teacher-training is sheer negation of its real aims and purposes.

A trained teacher is one who is professionally eligible for the vocation of his adoption. An enlightened teacher is one who has emerged from the tutelage of instruction, and seeks knowledge on his own wherever he can find it. Enlightenment is alias for widening of the horizon—mental and intellectual. The training course offers an appropriate occasion for refreshing and reinforcing knowledge. It is also an opportunity for renewing studentship, which by itself is a delightful and stimulating experience. The social contacts to be made during the time of

training are immensely valuable if cultivated in the proper spirit. Exchange of views and exchange of notes amongst people coming from different spheres and with different views facilitate better appreciation of the common problems. The teacher-educator and the teacher-in-training are much nearer to each other than the University teacher and the students usually are. The teacher-taught relation here is, and may be what it should be, namely, confidence-cum-cooperation-oriented getting mutual respect and camaraderie. The educationally advanced countries like the U.K., the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. fully endorse the idea that the teacher first of all needs to be an enlightened person with a firm footing in subject-knowledge. His knowledge background needs to be broad and firm so as to install him in the vocation in his own rights. Pedagogic probation will, of course, arm him well with the much-needed professional competency and eligibility, but the central focus is emphatically upon the content of subjects. The duration of the education courses in these countries runs over two, three or more years. The Indian Education Commission shares the same view.

Training to be looked upon as a mere means to get over the departmental bar in regard to the drawal of increment in the approved scale, is to look at things rather too narrowly, missing the main issue and ignoring the obvious. The oft-repeated plea that one must get trained only in order to be entitled to the periodic increments and for nothing else is absolutely pointless.

READING AN INTEGRATED PART OF PEDAGOGY

Language is the most useful instrument of communication. The *homo sapien* distinguished himself from the rest of the living beings by being able to communicate his hopes and fears, his sense of pleasure and displeasure to the other members of his species by means of certain symbols that eventually developed into languages. The primitive men roamed about in jungles hunting and gathering fruits and berries to sustain life. They moved in groups, and the first group would usually leave behind some signs on pliable ground or sand or on the branches of trees to indicate the way they had gone. These signs would help the followers. The hieroglyphs, the cuneiform and the Chinese script are sign-languages, each figure representing a certain idea or thought-unit. The Arabic script, for example, originated from marks on sands in or near the mouths of caves left for the guidance of the desert travellers. Lord Baden Powell, founder of the Scout Movement, adapted the jungle-signs used by the Zulus and other African tribes as part of scouting. The story of language-evolution from primitive signs to modern sophistry is a long and interesting saga. Let us imagine for a moment how from the crude symbols came the highly developed alphabet, the science of grammar and the systematized sentence-structure. Picture writing came first, then ideograms or signs for ideas or words that could not be pictured. Panini the great grammarian reformed and disciplined the divine language of the Indo-Aryans. Latin, the language of the Romans, influenced the major European languages. Sanskrit and Latin, Arabic and Chinese are indeed wonders of the art of human communication.

Though the art of communication has since undergone

amazing changes, and its variety now ranges from spoken and written words to the most sophisticated form of technology called tele-communication, language as the medium of exchange still holds the field undisputed.

Printed materials and books for that matter, are the best carriers and containers of language, the vehicle of human expression. The cultural importance of books, therefore, continues undiminished despite the strong impact of the mechanical mass communication devices. Books from time immemorial, the *Vedas*, the *Zend Avesta* and the books in the Greek and Latin languages since handed down to us, are the most valuable legacies of civilization, and transmitters of human thought and beauty. If all the books of the world today were consumed by fire of the folly of fanaticism, as the ancient library at Alexandria had once been put to the flames by the Roman soldiers, and the seats of learning at Taxila and Nalanda had been razed and ransacked by the invading Turks, a pall of darkness would descend upon the face of civilization, and the world hurled into the abyss of ignorance and insanity.

From the realistic down-to-earth point of view books are as essential to a man to keep himself mentally alive as consumer goods are necessary to sustain him physically. And yet a very frequent complaint lodged by the teachers is that the students are fast giving up the habit of reading. Taking for granted that the complaint is justified, a probe into its causes would, in the first instance, give rise to the question whether the teachers themselves reasonably practise what they casually profess. Conscientious and systematic reading is without contradiction an inescapable obligation on the part of a member of the teaching profession. Truly has it been said that to take lessons from a person who is constantly learning is to drink the water from a running stream fresh and health-giving, and on the other hand to learn from one who considers

himself learned enough is to drink the stale water from a stagnant pool. A teacher true to his mission is one who never ceases to look upon himself as a student continuously enriching and enlightening himself. Reading as an ingredient of enlightenment is and should be an integral part of the teacher's personal habit and routine-duty. This axiom raises a few specific questions : why to read, what to read and how to read ?

The first question is self-answered. It is by reading alone that a man keeps himself intellectually alert and abreast of men and things around him. It is by reading that he may be in communion with the rich legacies of the past and the promises of the future. A man without reading compares with the legendary ostrich with its head dipped into the desert sand exposed to dangers.

Equally vital is the question as to what to read. But any person sincerely bent upon doing his best is likely to be overawed by the vast magnitude of book-production today. The enormous rate of production of books confronts even the most conscientious and industrious reader with the problem of selection. He is faced with a predicament, and without proper guidelines he will be drifting into the dreary sands of futility and frustration. Though a large percentage of the books printed now-a-days may be brushed aside as ephemeral, yet the problem remains unmitigated for the simple reason that the myriad of production is beyond the compass of average reading ability. Selection, therefore, is a matter that merits utmost attention. It has been suggested that, in order to be really upto date in knowledge of modern English books, one must read at least sixty-six books a day. Is it not a superhuman task ?

Authoritative counsel, impartial and unprejudiced reviews, opinion of knowledgeable persons, etc., are reliable recipes. Coming to the question of selection our first choice falls on the universally recognized classics of which every developed

language is reasonably proud. The classics have been euphemistically called the *desiderate*, that is, books that are most talked about but seldom read. But still the classics constitute a fabulous world of human heritage to which every discerning reader should be properly inducted.

Next to the classics in point of preference comes what we may call the standard works on literature and science, etc. The intrinsic worth of a book is best assessed by the test of time, as G.K. Chesterton rightly puts it :

“People read a Dickens story six times because they know it so well. If they can read a modern novel six times, it is only because they can forget it six times”.

The base-camp must have a firm and broad foundation, wherefrom the assault upon the eyrie citadel of knowledge is to be launched. Planned, selective and systematic study lays down the foundation of such a base. There are books that do not require to be closely studied from the beginning to the end as text-books, but have to be consulted and referred to now and again. These help and guide our day-to-day reading, and serve as good companions for all time and purposes. Some standard lexicons, useful encyclopaedias dealing with the world of knowledge and information, digests of world literatures as well as important who's who, etc., deserve to be included in this assortment. One of the reliable yardsticks to measure a man's culture with is undoubtedly his personal book-collection or library. The collection may not in all cases be a prodigious one. Its quality is its correct index. There are books that people have to read sedulously in order to assimilate their substance, and there are books that people read avidly for the sake of mental recreation and entertainment. A personal library, though modest in size, may indeed be rich and varied in good choice and elegant taste.

From what to read arises the obvious question : how to read ? The most important maxim is to make reading an inalienable part of the day's business. Set apart time each day for reading good books. It is not the busiest amongst us who fail to find time for reading, it is but the indolent and easy-going, who complain so much about paucity of time. In good books the author puts himself in his best. People are apt to dissipate time in ephemeral talks in discussing questions. Discussion-groups are no substitutes for books. Ignorance is often multiplied in discussions, and one hundred times zero is still a zero.

Let us revert to the complaint that the students do not read now-a-days. If that is so, the best remedy lies in the teachers themselves taking to reading as normally as the duck takes to water. To make the students read, there must be teachers who read. It is for the teacher to introduce the students into the wonderland of books. A teacher himself inspired by the books he reads, can enthuse his students, and get them to do their own reading. The personal library of a teacher is what a stethoscope is to the physician. It is not only a part of his professional equipment but also his best credential. His personal library shows us who his friends are upon the bookshelves, and also how many friends he has. A teacher is best known by the company he keeps.

OUR LANGUAGE PROBLEM

“Diverse are the languages and varied are the people’s costumes and habits. Yet lo ! there’s unity in spite of these diversities”. —*Atulprasad Sen*

It is the Poet’s dream of forging unity out of the diversities in which India abounds. Language is an important cementing factor.

Brief History :

In the earliest times Sanskrit used to be the language of general education and that of the court and culture. There is hardly any nameworthy literature in *Prākṛit* which was the spoken language of the people, except perhaps the works of the great poet Bhāsa.

It was Buddha who first used *Prākṛit* as the medium of his mission. The Asokan edicts are also composed in *Prākṛit*. *Prākṛit* became for a time the medium of instruction during the Buddhistic period from the 5th century B.C. to about the 3rd century A.D. It may perhaps be concluded that in ancient India higher and sophisticated education in general was imparted through the medium of Sanskrit and not through the popular spoken language.

In the middle ages too the medium of higher education was either Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian. But it was during this period that the regional languages of India, namely, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, and Urdu etc., developed and flourished. The regional languages were also used as media of instruction at the primary level of education, i.e., in the Pāthsālās and Maktabas, etc.

The first move towards evolving a government-sponsored all-India medium of instruction was mooted in 1835 in the famous Bentinck-Macaulay minute. English was accepted as the medium of instruction. In this connection the great orientalist-occidentalists controversy may also be briefly recalled. An influential section of opinion led by people like Sir William Jones and Raja Radhakanta Dev Bahadur strongly favoured education through the classical languages whereas the progressives led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others advocated English and Western learning. There was yet a third school of opinion that recommended that the mother tongue or the regional language should be adopted as the medium of instruction. Adam in his reports espoused the cause of the indigenous pāthsālās and maktabas, and recommended their reorganization and improvement. Though his recommendation was not accepted by the Government, the logic of the argument in favour of the mother tongue was irrefutable, and even Macaulay himself observed that vernacular must be the medium of instruction in future.

According to Wood's Despatch in 1854 the policy of establishing vernacular schools was, however, adopted. Accordingly education could be imparted also through the medium of the vernacular (the regional language). But English continued to enjoy the most-favoured treatment. In the order of priority English occupied the first place, next came the vernacular or the child's mother tongue, and the third place went to the classical languages.

English as the language of the rulers and also the language of administration, naturally enjoyed priority over the indigenous languages. The indigenous languages were, therefore, neglected Cinderella-like, and mass-education suffered seriously in consequence. This accounts for the educational recession

of India in the 19th century, during which time the European countries went forward by leaps and bounds.

The next notable step was the Hunter Commission's Report (1882). The mother tongue received its rightful recognition as the medium of instruction at the primary stage of education all over the country. But English was not banned as such and held supremacy.

Nineteenth-Century Renaissance :

Regional languages particularly Bengali, Marathi and Tamil rapidly developed into new dimensions during the nineteenth century. The modern Indian languages flourished partly as a result of the impact of Western ideas and thoughts, and partly as a matter of all-round national revival. But though the movement for the development of our own languages and literature continued to gather momentum, English did not cease to enjoy its position of supremacy, and even though there were movements for the boycott of British goods and ultimately driving out the English from this country, no one seriously advocated boycott of the English language. On the other hand the national education movement which was part and parcel of the Swadeshi movement in the first two decades of the present century, crystallized two ideas of special significance :—

- (i) That education should at all stages be given through the medium of the mother tongue ;
- (ii) That the necessity of a *lingua franca* for India was widely appreciated.

From the beginning of the present century and as a result of the nationalist movement and struggle for freedom there grew a new consciousness about the un-qualified necessity of the mother tongue being used as the medium of instruction at all stages of education, the necessity of an all-India link-language and also that of a language for international exchange.

The same consciousness has also found expression in the Constitution of free India :

- (a) Fifteen regional languages have been included in the Schedule of the Constitution and recognized as the major languages of the land.
- (b) Hindi has been accepted as the official *lingua franca* or link-language for the Indian people.
- (c) English was retained as the official language for 15 years.

The above provisions may be regarded as the genesis of the subsequent Three-language Formula.

Mudhaliar Commission's Report

The recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) toe the same line, and may be summed up as follows :—

- (a) The mother tongue to be adopted as the medium of instruction.
- (b) Two more languages, *viz.*, Hindi and English to be studied at the Lower Secondary stage (Classes V to VIII).
- (c) Only two compulsory languages to be studied at the Higher Secondary Stage (Classes IX-X/XI).
- (d) A Classical language to be studied as an elective subject. In West Bengal, Sanskrit or any other classical language is studied as a compulsory subject in the Humanities stream.

Three-Language Formula

The Central Advisory Board of Education evolved the three-language-formula in 1956. This was afterwards approved at a Conference of the Chief Ministers in 1961, and also by

the National Integration Council. Accordingly Parliament passed the Language Bill in 1963. In brief, the provisions of the Language Act are :—

- (i) Hindi shall be the All-India official language. But so long as Hindi is not voluntarily accepted as such in the non-Hindi-speaking areas, English shall continue as the associate official language. The regional languages shall be the languages of administration in the respective States.
- (ii) The Union Public Service Commission examinations shall be held simultaneously in all the languages in Schedule VIII of the Constitution.
- (iii) The three-language formula should be adhered to in the educational institutions.

Vis-a-vis Education.

There are no two opinions about the vital importance of mother tongue as the medium of education. The policy is already in operation at the school stage, and partially in the Colleges and Universities. Lectures in Honours and Post-graduate classes are generally delivered in English, but answers may be written either in the regional language or English. This aspect of the Language Policy poses a special problem, namely, that the children of the linguistic minority communities do not sometimes find it possible to prosecute their studies in their own mother tongues, and are rather compelled to learn through the medium of a language other than their own. In spite of the Constitutional assurance that arrangements must be made for the teaching of the 'minority language' to a viable group, the spirit of provincialism very often holds sway. The problem of imparting education through the mother tongue medium at the University level particularly in scientific, technical and other specialized subjects such as Law, Commerce, Engineering, Medicine, etc., still remains largely unsolved.

Dearth of suitable books on these subjects and lack of suitable terminology stand out as two stumbling blocks in the way. English, therefore, continues and shall continue to be the medium of education in the field of higher education and research.

Controversy rages round the question of why Hindi is to be used as the link language of India. From the numerical point of view the priority of the claim of Hindi over any other Indian language cannot be disputed. It is the language most widely spoken, and more widely understood in India than any other language. The position is as follows :—

1961 Census

No. of Hindi-speaking people	...	over 16 crores
No. of Telugu " "	...	" 3.77 "
No. of Bengali " "	...	" 3.39 "
No. of Marathi " "	...	" 3.33 "
No. of Tamil " "	...	" 3.07 "

Hindi also ranks as the third most widely-spoken language of the world.

Chinese spoken by	...	63 crores
English " "	...	29 "
Hindi " "	...	16 "
Russian " "	...	16 "

As an inter-State language for the purposes of travel, pilgrimage, trade and commerce, etc., the importance of Hindi seems undeniable. It is a pity that an apparently innocent matter should become the subject of a bitter and protracted controversy between the fanatical pro-Hindi propagandists and the obdurate anti-Hindi agitators. The stiffest resistance to Hindi is being offered by the people of the South. The eastern and the southern States, in particular, view with apprehension any move to introduce Hindi as a

super-imposition designed to perpetuate domination of Hindi over the other regional languages. The mailed fist of "Hindi imperialism" is suspected under the velvet glove of a national *lingua franca*. The extremist protagonists of Hindi seem to suffer from a peculiar complex of false patriotism. The '*Angrezi Hatao*' (drive away English) movement of the so-called ultra-patriots is but sheer hypocrisy, for while English dress, English habits and mannerisms etc. continue galore the language (which is the richest in the world today) should according to them be discarded unceremoniously.

A plausible psychological explanation of this mentality is : shun as evil anything that calls for industry and application, and take to the path of effortless ease. '*Angrezi Hatao*' is for all purposes an empty slogan of the defeatists and the anti-Hindi movement particularly in the South is but a thoughtless reaction to Hindi fanaticism. Even though Hindi has been introduced in the schools in the non-Hindi areas, its progress nowhere has been satisfactory. Really serious efforts have not been made to spread and popularise Hindi. Nor have the Hindi-speaking people taken earnestly to learning one of the modern Indian languages other than their own. The position in a nutshell is an inevitable stalemate.

English though decried by a section of politicians is flourishing jolly well in free India. Besides being one of the fifteen scheduled languages, and the mother-tongue of a cognizable section of the population, English is still the prestige language. This is evident from the fact that the number of English-medium schools in the country has multiplied almost ten times since Independence, and significantly enough, their enrolment comprises nine-tenths non-Anglo-Indians and only one-tenth Anglo-Indians. In the field of publication too, the English titles command the highest number. Circulation of English newspapers in most cases equals, if not exceeds that of the

newspapers in the Indian languages. Thus to all appearances, English has come to stay as the library language or the language for cultural and international contact.

Kothari Commission :

The Education Commission (1964-66) has endorsed the three-language formula and made some suggestions for its implementation in Schools.

Several factors have added to the difficulties in implementing the three-language formula. These are the heavy language load in the school curriculum, lack of motivation for the study of an additional Indian language in the Hindi areas, political resistance to the study of Hindi in some non-Hindi areas, the heavy cost involved in providing for the teaching of the second and the third language for five to six years (VI to X or XI), and above all defective planning and half-hearted measures to execute it.

The Commission is of the opinion that the most suitable stage for learning the three languages is the lower secondary stage (Classes VIII-X) where smaller number of pupils are involved and better teaching facilities can be provided. It is desirable to stagger the introduction of two additional languages so that one is started at the higher primary stage (Class V-VII), and the other at the lower secondary stage after the first additional language has been mastered to some extent. Under good schooling three years of compulsory study may be adequate for gaining a working knowledge of the third language. The stage at which Hindi or English should be introduced on a compulsory basis as a second language, and the period for which it should be taught will depend on local motivation and needs.

In the light of the above, a modified or graduated three-language formula has been recommended :—

- (1) The mother tongue or the regional language ;
- (2) The official language (Hindi) of the Union or the associate official language as long as it is current ;
- (3) A modern Indian language or a foreign language not covered under (1) and (2) and other than that used as the medium of instruction ; and
- (4) At no stage should the learning of four languages be made compulsory, but opportunities should be available for the study of four or even more languages on a voluntary basis.

The position may be summed up.

At the higher primary stage (Classes V to VII) only two languages should be studied on a compulsory basis, namely, the mother tongue/regional language and the official or associate official language of the Union. For all the pupils in the Hindi areas and for a majority of them in the non-Hindi areas English will probably be the second language. In addition, facilities should be provided for the study of a third language on an optional basis, so that the children in the Hindi areas whose mother tongue is not Hindi and the children in the non-Hindi areas who study English as the second language may study the official language of the Union. Thus the pupils in the Hindi areas will study Hindi, English and a modern Indian language, and the pupils in the non-Hindi areas will mostly learn the regional language, English and Hindi.

THE PROBLEM OF EXAMINATION

Examination is really revision—a part of the teaching process, which is constantly resorted to by the teacher in one form or another. An earlier lesson is revised (before introducing a new lesson) in the form of questions, class exercises and home-tasks. A running lesson is concurrently revised by means of intermittent questions. Examination, therefore, is an integral part of teaching and school-work. Examination is also a means to assess progress in the subjects taught. As a natural day-to-day teaching process examination seems to be an unobjectionable and innocent affair.

But trouble starts when examination changes its colour from normal revision to formal and rigid instrument of selection and promotion. School promotion is granted on the results of the annual examination. Academic certificates, diplomas and degrees etc. are awarded on the results of examinations. Success or otherwise in the examinations to a large extent determines the candidate's future career, and advances or reduces his social status. Examinations as such are viewed rather seriously, and arouse a sense of fear and desperation. It is looked upon as an unwelcome ordeal to be gone through at the end of an academic term. Psychologically no man ever relishes being examined. Examination nevertheless is an indispensable feature of any educational system. It may be abhorred but cannot be abolished.

A Faulty Approach :

Our present system of examination suffers from one apparent defect, namely, that the paper-setter examines the student

on what he is supposed to be taught. But how he is taught seldom comes under the paper-setter's or the examiner's purview. If a subject is taught mainly orally, it is certainly not fair to set questions for written examination. To set questions on map-drawing or map-pointing without using maps in the class is definitely unjustifiable. The teacher adopts various methods in course of teaching—he lectures and discourses, he makes the pupils read their text-books, he uses source materials and holds demonstrations, he may also attempt dramatization. Why then should the examination be solely a written one?

Secondly, in our educational system it is the examination that determines the nature of instruction. The teacher has constantly to keep the finale, *i.e.*, the examination, in his view. The preferable alternative is that the system of instruction should determine the nature of examination. This is the most rational approach to this problem. That is how the examiner may be prevented from turning tyrants following exotic standards without taking account of what and how a subject is taught. Examination, by and large, should conform not only to what is taught but also to how it is taught. Hence the teacher is the best possible person to plan the pattern of examination. The problem of personal factors, likes and dislikes, impressions and inhibitions etc. may be largely eliminated by new devices.

Types of Examination :

The following are some of the generally prevalent types of examination :

- (i) Written Test.
- (ii) Oral examination or *Viva Voce*.
- (iii) Practical work.
- (vi) Cumulative Record System on the basis of the daily Index-card.

The most common form of examination is the written test. The written test follows two set patterns, namely, a few so-called essay-type questions, or a large number of small questions to test not only knowledge, but also power of judgement and inference, etc. The traditional essay-type examination has been assailed time and often as defective. In such a type of examination the candidate is required to write five or six short essays within three hours. The main points of criticism against this system are :

- (i) It is not possible to test the knowledge of the subject as a whole. The examinee may intelligently or by taking chances, skip over chapters and concentrate on a few select topics.
- (ii) Language ability of the examinee earns greater credit than his subject knowledge.
- (iii) And thirdly, this kind of examination encourages unintelligent cramming.

But despite all these defects of the essay-type questions, it is to be admitted that an essay makes one think, recall facts, select and arrange them in the proper order, and above all promotes the power of expression, the value of which is so high in any system of education. The essay serves certain useful purposes, and it is difficult to find a good substitute.

New-Type Examination

In the new-type examination a much larger number of short questions are set to test the candidate's knowledge, memory, power of judgement, sense of sequence and intelligent inference, etc. It is possible to provide a wider if not a near-total coverage of the course of study. It may also eliminate the evil practice of unintelligent cramming and reduces the element of the examiner's personal predilection. So far so

good. But the New Tests too are not all infallible. All the different varieties, namely, True-false Test, Multiple-choice Test, Completion Test, Matching Test, Sequence Test, etc., also suffer from the fault of chance and luck element. This system does away with composition and power of expression altogether. These tests encourage guess-work. Though suitable for the lower stage and partially so for the upper stages, the new-type tests cannot supplant the essay-type *in toto*. The best line of action seems to be to strike a middle course. Intelligent essay-type questions obviating cramming and skipping-over, and interspersed with some new-type tests seems to be a fairly acceptable solution of this complex problem of examination.

The System of Marking :

Examination marks, in whatever form they are indicated whether in numerical figures, percentage, class or division, pass and failure as in the certificates or diplomas, are in reality a residue of the errors of measurement. Divested of technical definition errors of measurement comes to what is known as difference due to personal adjudgement and attitude. The same answers examined by two different examiners independent of each other, or by the same examiner on different occasions will show significant mean difference. The standard of marking varies from examiner to examiner, and also according to the examiner's mood at any particular time or under certain circumstances. Answer-scripts selected at random and examined independently by different persons reveal wide disparity in marking, and even in the mean scores. A student ranked low in one University migrates to another, and succeeds in scoring high in the identical courses. A student examined twice by the same examiner is also known to have been awarded different marks. All these point unmistakably to the fact that no system of marking (particularly of the common essay-type

examination) is absolutely faultless. Even the totalling of marks is in some cases misleading. The examinee scores high in some answers but is low in others, and both high and low scores are rolled into one to indicate the quality of his performance. To add the high and low marks and treat the total as a composite score is not intellectual honesty, nor logically correct. To all intents and purposes marks are a dependent variable, and should not, as such, be taken as an absolute measure of the examinee's knowledge. It is a distorted picture of one's academic attainment. The errors of measurement mean the difference between what the student really deserves, and what he is actually given—the just score and the score obtained.

It has been found that a score obtained on a test comprising five questions may be wrong by 95%, *i.e.*, 95 points away from the true score, even when the examinable points in the course of study is 100. Thus the label of success or the stigma of failure on the basis of marks awarded on a five-question examination, may be misleading to a degree. The question now is : how these errors may be minimized. One way out is to examine the students on all the examinable units of the prescribed course of study. This of course implies a much lengthier test, and lengthier the test the more accurate may be the marking. Choice or option in the question-paper enhances chances and coincidences.

Mass Examinations :

No external examining body—the Board of Education or the University—can possibly examine the students on all or even the majority of the examinable units. The massive public examinations as are in vogue in our country, are at best an attempt at maintaining a generally comparable standard of assessment. It is only the teacher who is in a position to arrange examination on all or most of the examinable units by

various means at his disposal such as oral test, essay-type tests and objective-type tests on day to day work. The feasibility and justifiability of such a measure as a substitute for the existing massive system of examination are of course largely dependent on the competence and special training of the teacher, and above all, upon the quality of instruction and academic fitness of the schools and colleges.

University Examinations :

The schools and colleges may be authorized under the new dispensation to issue certificates to be recognized on the state and national level for certain general purposes. Total abolition of the University examinations for specific and selective purposes cannot, however, be visualized at any time. The external University examinations should be there, but only the deserving should go in for them. These examinations should be open to all but under special circumstances only a few may really care to take them.

System of Examination in England :

There is no national leaving examination for the Secondary School pupils in England. But they may take the General Certificate of Education (GCE) or the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) Examinations conducted by independent examining bodies connected with Universities. These examinations are set at two levels, Ordinary (O) and Advanced (A). The O-level examinations are usually taken at the end of a five-year Secondary School Course. The A-level examinations are meant for those who have prosecuted two more years' study. The A-level results are used to select candidates for admission to the universities other than Oxford and Cambridge, whose Colleges hold entrance examinations of their own.

There are no compulsory subjects at either level, and candidates may take as many or as few subjects and as

many times as they wish. The same subject need not be taken at both O and A levels. A candidate failing at A-level may be awarded an O-level pass on the result of his A-level performance. The examinations are open to any suitable candidate whether attending school or not, and there is no upper age limit. There are about 80 subjects to choose at the O-level and 60 at the A-level including art, music, handicrafts, domestic, technical and commercial subjects. The GCE and CSE examinations conducted by the fourteen regional examining boards notwithstanding, the schools themselves may prepare their own syllabuses and conduct their own examinations subject only to moderation by the regional board to ensure comparability. Control over the scope and standard of the examinations is exercised by the independent Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations to ensure national comparability.

Examination in U.S.S.R. :

An important feature of the examination system in the U.S.S.R. is that in a large number of subjects/papers, the examination is oral. There may be some written tests in subjects like English language, Russian language, literature and philosophy, etc., in which expression, style, comprehension and critical faculty have to be tested. In the faculties of engineering, sciences and social sciences, the examination is generally oral through the ticket system, and is conducted by a panel of professors in the subjects concerned. The oral examination or *viva voce* is of about 30 minutes' duration, and the written tests of about two hours during which the candidate has to answer two to three questions. No one is allowed to appear at the examination held at the end of each Semester Course unless he has completed home assignments, laboratory and practical work and periodical tests.

There are two kinds of examinations during the term time,

one in respect of home assignment and laboratory and practical work, which the student has to complete satisfactorily, and for which no grading is done. The other is related to an evaluation of the control papers in which the candidates are graded on a five-point scale according to their performances. The grades earned by a student in the control papers are taken into consideration in the award of the final grade on the basis of oral-cum-written examination.

The student is required to choose a ticket containing three to four questions, and has to answer questions pertaining to the ticket as well as some supplementary questions. This system undoubtedly has an element of chance. The tickets may not be of an equivalent standard, and three or four questions would never represent the universe of knowledge.

The grading is on a five-point scale, namely, Excellent-5 ; Good-4 ; Satisfactory-3 ; Poor-2 ; and Fail-1. No student is promoted to the next higher course unless his performance is adjudged to be at least satisfactory in the examination for the preceding semester. The maximum number of chances allowed to a candidate is three. Failure in the third chance results in expulsion of the student. There is no fixed time-schedule for the semester examination, and the student is free to declare any time after completing the term work and sessional tests that he is ready to take the examination.

TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS

The poets are in reality the greatest teachers of mankind. The masters of ancient classics Vyas, Valmiki, Homer, Virgil and Dante sang the song of human life, and portrayed the life-story of the people of their ages. In their works we have a genuine and realistic representation of the religious, social, political, economic and cultural facets of the communities to which they belonged, and they have handed down to us a heritage of universal value and enduring appeal. They subsist through the ages, and thus serve as the highest schools of humanity. The world's epics are rightly regarded as true *ecole international*. It is education for living that we usually look for from our schools and like other institutions. We need something more than living. It is life. And education for life is imparted by the great classics, through the lessons of abiding human value.

"All that there is, and all that pervades the universe belongs but to God, the Supreme Being. Nothing is yours. Crave not anything, but enjoy all things in a spirit of renunciation." So says the *Upanishad*, the book of wisdom. The oriental philosophy of education draws its initial inspiration from the above gospel of the *Upanishad*. A poet, philosopher and teacher of our time, who interpreted the Upanishadic message in modern terms of pragmatic education was Rabindranath Tagore. He himself is no author of any epic-style poetry. He was essentially a lyric poet, but the wide and infinitely varied range and the unique beauty and quality of his literary and artistic creation has earned for him the distinction due to

an epic poet, and vouchsafed his place in the *Valhalla* of Muse. One thing to be specially noted about Rabindranath is that he was not only a teacher in the philosophical sense as a poet is usually regarded, but one in the practical and pedagogical sense of the term. His contributions to education were both ideological and empirical. He actually practised what he professed. He gave a material shape to his message. Curiously enough, himself a truant in his own time, Rabindranath embarked upon a courageous plan of educational reform in his later life. The humdrum environment of the schools he attended one after another had more than convinced him about the futility of an exotic system of education, the drabness and artificiality of which pained and disappointed him. In a pithy remark he said, "Why penalize an examinee for clandestinely carrying prohibited papers in his pocket with a view to copying his answers therefrom, and why reward the other for carrying the whole book inside his head for the same purpose?" Natural development of human faculties, and not mere rote-memory was the keynote of his educational ideas. The *Upanishad* is the mainspring of Tagore's ideological inspiration. His educational philosophy is basically inspired by the Upanishadic thought embodied in "*Satyagnamanatam Brahma. Anandarupamamritam Yadbivati, Santam, Sivam, Advaitam*". Not only the ideals of Tagore's Viswa-Bharati University but his own life and mission as well have deep moorings in the teachings of the *Upanishad*. His own interpretation reads as follows :

Santam, Sivam, Advaitam :

The secret of attaining bliss (*Santam*), well-being (*Sivam*) and unity (*Advaitam*) through knowledge (*Jnanam*), work (*Karma*) and love (*Prem*) is clearly implied in this particular incantation of the *Upanishad*. First comes *Santam*. The forces of Nature are seemingly varied, chaotic and turbulent. He

who ordains calm in the midst of chaos, He who dispenses the law of Cosmos in the midst of the warring irreconcilables is *sakti*, the springhead of all power. The first duty of life, therefore, is to acquire power through the medium of peace and restraint. Power acquired through restraint facilitates the execution of *karma*. He who reconciles the differences and conflicts between the inner and external nature is *Sivam*.

Without restraint the world rushes headlong towards the cataclysm, and human society faces extinction without the will for the good. It is with knowledge alone that one may contemplate of nature's role of peace, and it is by beneficent deeds that one may bring about universal well-being. First prepare thyself by *Brahmacharyya*, that is, the process of education and then attain wisdom and maturity by performing your worldly duties. The finale is *Adwaitam*. As the worldly bondage wears out in course of pursuing the mission of welfare, and as pride or egoism dwindles and vanishes, and all inner and external conflicts come to an end, the path of love opens up through the spirit of humility and compassion. It is then that integration with the divine spirit is attained. This is *Adwaitam*. By knowledge one attains bliss and calm (*Santam*), work culminates in well-being (*Sivam*), and love is sublimated in integration (*Adwaitam*). In other words it is 'to study the mind, and man in its realization of the different aspects of truth from diverse points of view'.

Tagore was no mere theoretician. Work itself was the test of his theory. Tagore put into practice what he professed and preached. Inculcation of a spiritual culture was the principal aim of the school he founded at Bolpur. The *ashramik* forest schools of old stood for such an ideal. The *guru* or the teacher of such schools were persons who had dedicated themselves to the task of imbibing the divine spirit, the *Brahma*. The pupils lived close to their preceptors. The teacher-taught relation grew

into an intimate spiritual partnership. The idyllic environment of the forest school made the longing for the Infinite keener. Contact with nature is likened to an "Embrace of the Infinite." Man's mind unfolds itself in intimate contact with nature, just as the bud unfolds its petals at the touch of dew at nightfall. It is thus possible to be aware of the universal spirit that pervades all elements.

"One impulse from the vernal wood,
Can teach us more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

The school in a modern town is more or less a workshop in the man-made environment, and is hardly conducive to spiritual development of man. The open, unbarred sky, the fresh and free air blowing over the fields and dales and the lushy green of the woodland provide natural stimulus to the growth of the human body and mind. Let children be in the open and enjoy their antics in the colourful interplay of sunshine and cloud, and thus be blessed by the embrace of eternity.

An Ideal School :

An ideal school, says Tagore, may be established only in an open and free environment of nature far from the madding crowds in a healthy sylvan setting, where the teachers are dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, and where students will live in their close, affectionate and inspiring company. The old ideals of the *ashramik* school find a distinct echo in the Poet's fancy. But far from being fanciful, the Poet is fully alive to the calls of mundane life. The school should be endowed with land fit for growing flowers, fruits, vegetables and cereals. The students will be required to lend their helping hands to the practical processes of cultivation and learn the art at first-hand. Animal husbandry should be a part of

the school activity, and so also gardening and kitchen duty. The educative value of self-help has been fully recognized. Tagore laid due emphasis on the social aspect of education as well. His famous school at Santiniketan situated as it was at a considerable distance from the din and bustle of populous towns, was at no time without its service-link with the surrounding countryside. The Rural Institute at Sreeniketan is the institutional embodiment of Rabindranath's views about community education. Tagore was a pioneer in many fields of modern education in India. It was he who first conceived and sponsored the idea of work-cum-education, education through community service, university extension programme, etc. All that he planned and carried out, bore the unmistakable stamp of his genius.

School of the Poet's Vision :

But the school of Tagore was, above all, an image of his poetic vision. In fair weather the classes shall assemble under the shady green-wood trees. Instruction will be imparted orally by the teachers while sauntering along the shaded pathways accompanied by their pupils. The evenings will be spent in star-gazing, cultivation of music and recital of stories from the *Puranas* and history.

Rabindranath visualized the establishment of a cultural and spiritual contact between India and the world at large through the good offices of the *Viswa-Bharati* University which was founded by him in 1922. The statement of aims and objectives reads :

"Here will be established a centre for the study of universal humanities. The days of territorial nationalism are numbered. The future is marked for internationalism, and its beginning should be initiated here and now. This University shall transcend all geographical barriers and shall be the meeting-

ground of man as man. The last mission of my life now fast ebbing is to liberate the world from the shackles of nationalistic vanity and egoism."

In Tagore's own words the objectives have been further explained.

"The study of religion, literature, history, science and art of all the Indian communities may be pursued along with the culture of the West in amity, good fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste and in the name of the One Supreme Being, who is *Santam, Sivam, Adwaitam*."

The final aim of the *Viswa-Bharati* was by and large to promote international friendship and understanding. To illustrate the point mention should be made of the faculties of linguistic and cultural studies at the *Viswa-Bharati* and the '*China Bhaban*' in particular.

Methodology and Practice :

From a truant to a teacher briefly sums up Tagore's role as an educationist. He had his own sore and sad experiences at school, the environment and discipline of which seemed to him soulless and mechanical. The walls of the class-room stared at him as the eye-balls of the dead. His highly sensitive mind was pained and afflicted, and rebelled against the traditional system of education of which he was a prisoner. He sarcastically recalled his school-days as 'life in transportation,' and wondered why the reluctant boy should not flee his home and escape to the school instead of running away from the school. The principles and method of teaching advocated by him were marked by some special features, namely,

- (i) Education should be transmitted and received through joy, a correct approach to education from

the psychological point of view. We retain such things that give us joy or pleasure, and abjure things that we do not cherish.

- (ii) The joy of living is to be derived from natural environment. This is to be achieved by the creation of interest in Natural History and nature study. The cycle of seasons presents nature's message to us through the colourful blossoms and the chorus of birds. His immortal season-songs echo and re-echo his love of nature.
- (iii) He differs fundamentally from the doctrine of austerity enjoined by the ancient system of *Brahmacharyya*. Faces beaming with joy were all that he wanted of his students, and for that he had introduced songs, dances, sketching and painting, drama and literary symposia as some of the unconventional media of teaching and learning. The school books that he wrote are no humdrum treatises stuffed with information but a pleasant departure from the commonplace, stimulating and interesting. He wanted to minimize and eliminate the difference between work, study and play. Study could be like play, and work was no drudge.

Meaningful observation of one's social environment and life in the neighbourhood was a part of his methodology. The school-life was not to be divorced from the life of the community. For all practical purposes Tagore was also a pioneer in this country in introducing a practical form of Extension Service.

Creative Education :

He did not altogether rule out the necessity of examination as a part of any educational system. Even conceding the

legitimate demand of examination upon the school routine, time could be accommodated for creative co-curricular activities. He was the exponent of the theory of education for life over and above education for living. His system may be called creative as well as aesthetic. Wood-work, leather-craft, clay-modelling, gardening, cookery and catering are some of the practical aspects of work at the Shantiniketan school. Those who are now indulging in the senseless orgy of destroying school property may search their conscience, and ask themselves whether they created the things that they seek to destroy.

Learning Vs Education :

Learning according to an old classical concept was the best among all kinds of nutrition. Examination-ridden education has very little nourishment to offer. Vocational education is, of course, necessary to meet the demands of daily living. But man still needs something more than the mere means of livelihood. Learning of the traditional type is tantamount to acquiring information and skills. Real education shapes and influences man's character and personality. Book-learning alone cannot be equated with education. A man without intellectual enlightenment and emotional sublimation should not be regarded as enlightened despite all his acquired learning. It is not for everyone to become a scholar. But true education renders a person straightforward, right-thinking, rational and vitally alive.

Teacher's Responsible Role :

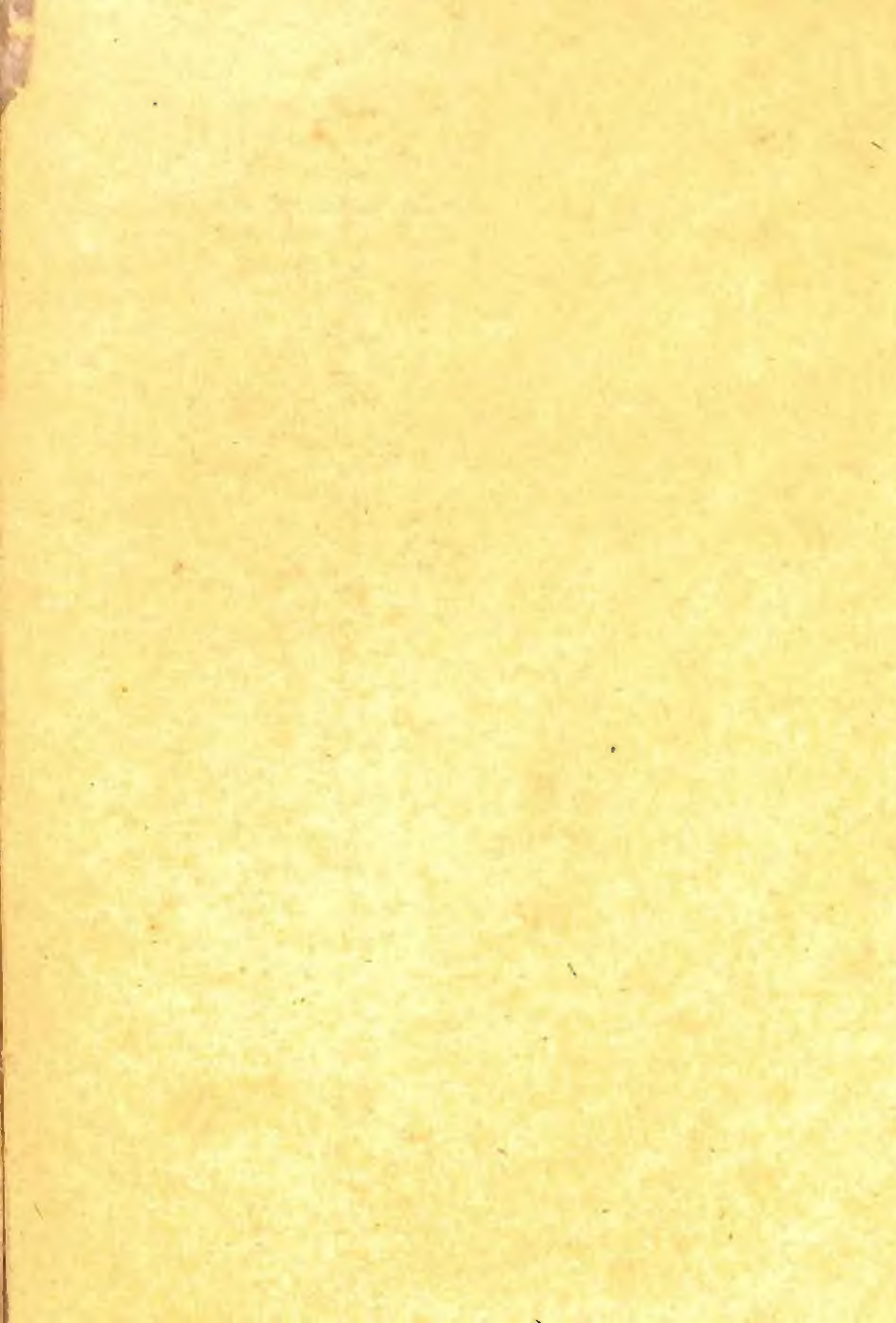
The role of the teacher and that of the pupil are considered as of equal importance in the process of education. The noble role of the teacher has been interpreted in the light of the gospel of the *Upanishad*. The teacher gives the call to his pupils to come to him as the streams rush to the sea, and as the days and months converge into the year. Let both of us show our

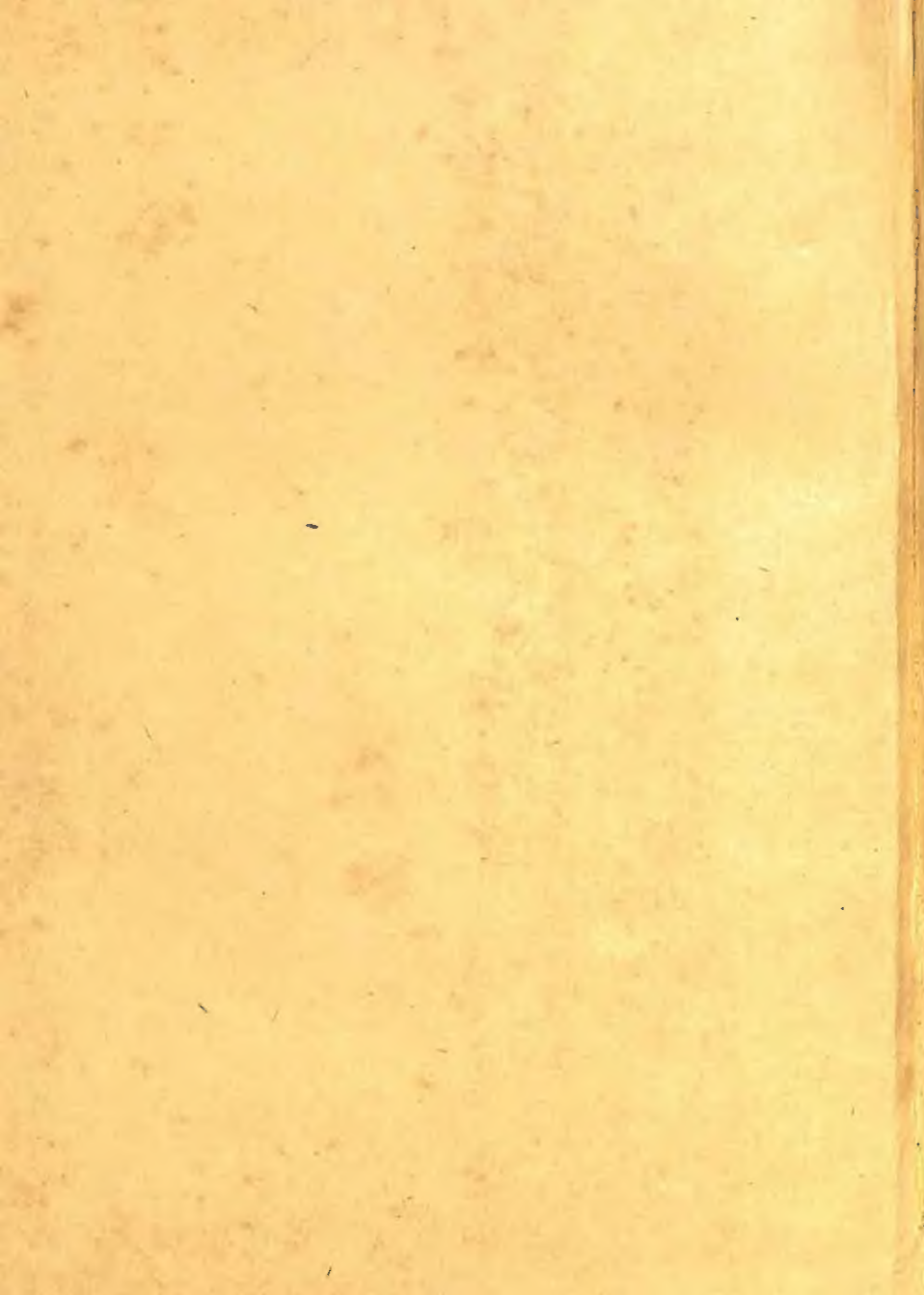
prowess together, and together shall we tread the path of knowledge with energy and industry. Never shall we grudge each other, and we both shall pursue the goal of common good. Teacher-student partnership on the basis of mutual esteem and affection constitutes the key-note of his educational methodology.

No Illusion :

Rabindranath himself suffered from no illusion, and did not anticipate overwhelming popularity for this unorthodox approach to education. Popularity oftentimes belies the intrinsic value of a thing. He, however, held fast to his conviction about the efficacy of his system as an ideal. The real value of an ideal consists in the trials and efforts to achieve it, rather than actual achievement. The open-air classes after the Shantiniketan style has received fairly wide acceptance. Contact and communion with nature are considered essential for the development of a healthy mind in a healthy body. In a very large way Rabindranath was the forerunner of the famous *Nai Talim* and the Basic Education programme later on more elaborately formulated by Gandhiji. Craft-work, self-help, self-sufficiency and self-governance in school-work and administration as originally conceived by Tagore have been subsequently incorporated in the Basic Education system as sound educational *modus operandi*.

Aesthetic education through music, painting, dance and drama has gone a long way, and gained widespread currency and popularity in our schools and colleges. Tagore was the founder of an entirely new system of aesthetics, which is now universally appreciated and widely practised. Though 'basically and ideologically oriental in outlook, Tagore attempted a harmonious synthesis between Indian and Western educational thoughts. Shantiniketan according to his concept was to be a living link between the East and the West and a cradle for human culture.







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